00103580

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY,
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 10 August, 2018

WOMEN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

WOMEN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY

WINIFRED STEPHENS

Author of "Madame Adam," "The France I Know," etc., and Editor of "The Book of France"

103580

LONDON

CHAPMAN & HALL LIMITED

1922

00103580

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE NORTHUMBERLAND PRESS LTD., THORNTON STREET, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

FOREWORD

THE Women of the French Revolution is so vast a theme that hitherto, even in France, it has not yet met with anything like exhaustive treatment. Michelet himself admits that the title of his book, *Les Femmes de la Révolution*,[1] is misleading, and that he has written of a few heroines rather than of the mass of revolutionary women. A much later writer, M. Adrien Lasserre, in his work on Women's Participation in the Revolution[2] says that he has found it impossible to cover completely a field so extensive. The attempt which M. Lasserre has renounced cannot be made here. All I hope to do is to give some idea of the rank and file of revolutionary women and of their famous leaders, during little more than a brief period of five memorable years. That period extends from May, 1789, until July, 1794, with some glances now and then, before and after.

One aspect of this subject of revolutionary women —their connection with the secret societies of the day— I have purposely ignored. It is obscure and highly controversial. Unfortunately, though these societies have been much written about, and especially of late, it has often been in a partisan spirit. This book will constantly deal with parties, but I trust not in the spirit of a partisan.

Of the three methods of treating this subject, the strictly chronological method, the biographical, and a

[1] *Edition définitive revue et corrigée* (*Œuvres Complètes de Michelet*), Ernest Flammarion.

[2] *La Participation Collective des Femmes à la Révolution Française* (1906).

classification according to the play of ideas and the modes and fields of action, I have chosen the last. Though it has its drawbacks, one of which is some slight repetition, it seems to me that this method gives the clearest impression of the movement as a whole, and of the part women played in it.

I have spent some time in the Bibliothèque Nationale consulting pamphlets published during the Revolution, and in the Galerie des Estampes looking through portfolios of contemporary prints. Otherwise I can lay no claim to having made any original research. I have reaped where others have sown; and gladly do I here acknowledge my debt and record my gratitude first to Professor Aulard for the interest he has taken in this book and the help he has given me in writing it, and then to the works of Professor Albert Mathiez, M. Louis Madelin, M. Adrien Lasserre, M. Léopold Lacour, M. Léon Abensour, Le Baron Marc de Villiers, and other living writers on the Revolution, as well as to their predecessors, who are no longer with us.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD 5

INTRODUCTION

Woman's part in the Revolution 13

CHAPTER I

WOMEN AGITATORS

Mme Legros succeeds in delivering the prisoner, Latude—Women at the taking of the Bastille—Women and the food scarcity—The women's procession to Versailles—The orderly and disorderly elements in the procession and throughout the Revolution—Origin of the term *Tricoteuse*—The leaders of the procession—Théroigne de Méricourt—Her previous story—Her part in the procession—La Reine Audu—Her trial by the Châtelet Law Court—Her imprisonment and subsequent history—The result of women's début in the Revolution 21

CHAPTER II

SALONS AND SALONNIÈRES

The new seriousness—Political influence of the Revolution salon—Marat at Mme Talma's—Mme de Condorcet—Her early life—Marriage—Her salon at l'Hôtel des Monnaies—The Lycée—The salon of Mme Helvétius at Auteuil—The Condorcets at Auteuil—Condorcet proscribed and in hiding — His wife's poverty — His death — Auteuil after Thermidor—Bonaparte at the salon of Mme Helvétius—Her death—Mme de Condorcet as a salonnière compared with Mme de Staël—The salon of Mme de Staël 52

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER III

CLUBS AND CLUB WOMEN

The origin of the club habit—At first discouraged by the Government—As soon as the Government's opposition is removed, the clubmania breaks out—Three main kinds of clubs: (1) for men only, (2) for men and women, (3) for women only—The importance of the clubs—The origin of the Jacobins—Their attitude towards women—Women address the club—Théroigne de Méricourt receives an ovation from the club on her return from prison in Austria—Her speeches at the club—Those of Claire Lacombe—Origin and character of the Cordeliers Club—Did they admit women as members?—Women address the club—Théroigne's speech to the Cordeliers District—Mme de Genlis visits the Cordeliers—Le Cercle Social—Its origin and character—Its newspaper, *Bouche de Fer*—Women members—The Fraternal or Popular Societies—Societies of both sexes—The Jacobin Fraternal the earliest of these societies—Its founder—The Society's increasing importance—The foundation of similar societies in other parts of Paris and throughout France—Admission of children—The varied activities of the societies—Their tendency to become Women's Clubs—The foundation of clubs for women only—The Lyons Women's Club—The earliest at Paris "les Amies de la Vérité"—Its foundress, Etta Palm d'Ælders—Club of Les Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires—Their association with the Ultra Terrorists, *les Enragés*—Its presidents—Its activities—Its disorderliness—Théroigne de Méricourt's attempt to found a Women's Club—Her denunciation in the Jacobin Club—Inquiry into the question of Women's Clubs—Suppression of Women's Clubs—Of all clubs 80

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN WRITERS—MADAME ROLAND

Mme Roland as a writer and maker of the Revolution—Comparison with Mme de Staël—Their relations with one another—Their temperaments contrasted—Both disciples of Jean Jacques Rousseau—The early life of Mme Roland—Her marriage—She commences author—She comes to Paris—Her salon—Her husband Minister of the Interior—Her share in her husband's work—Her influence in founding and directing the Girondist Party—Her opinion of the King—Roland's letter to the King—Roland's second Ministry—The Rolands' growing unpopularity—Roland's resignation—Mme Roland's arrest—Her fate linked with Charlotte Corday's—Her prison life—She writes her Memoirs—Her trial—Her execution—Her mysterious love story . . 107

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF THE REVOLUTION TOLD BY ITS WOMEN WRITERS

Mme de Staël, Mme Roland, Mme de Genlis, Mme Jullien, Louise Fusil and Charlotte Robespierre—Their varying objects, political points of view, and the periods during which they wrote—Mme de Staël describes the meeting of the States-General—Her portraits of Mirabeau and Necker—Mme de Genlis makes the Revolution begin on her own birthday—Mme de Staël describes the events leading to the fall of the Bastille—Mme de Genlis watches the destruction of the fortress—Mme de Staël tells of her father's return from exile and of his popularity—Louise Fusil describes the preparations for the Festival of the Federation—Mme de Staël's account of the Festival—Louise Fusil on the death of Mirabeau —Mme de Genlis narrowly escapes arrest—Mme Jullien on the war—On disturbances in the Paris streets—On Roland's Ministry—On the eve of the 20th of June attack on the Tuileries—At the assembly—In the Palace—Mme Jullien and Louise Fusil on the 10th of August—Mme Jullien writes of the prison massacres—She describes the Robespierre family—Charlotte Robespierre on the Duplay family—Mme de Genlis spends a night in Paris—Her life at Tournay—Her travels—She hears of Robespierre's death—Charlotte Robespierre's story of Thermidor—Mme de Genlis' impression of France and Frenchwomen after the Revolution 128

CHAPTER VI

MINOR WOMEN WRITERS OF THE REVOLUTION

Playwrights — Julie Candeille and Olympe de Gouges — Pamphleteers and political writers—Olympe as a pamphleteer—Her adventurous youth—Her political career—Her proposal to defend the King at his trial—Women journalists and editors—Women's newspapers—Louise de Kéralio—Women printers 160

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN AT ARMS

Women Militarists—Olympe, Pauline Léon, and Théroigne de Méricourt attempt to organise bands of Amazons—Claire Lacombe and others offer their military services to the Legislative Assembly—The Fernig sisters serve in Dumouriez's Army—The Convention recognises their valour—Their subsequent story 176

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER VIII

CHARLOTTE CORDAY

Her blow struck in the wrong quarter—Her descent from Corneille—Her early life and education—Her youthful Republicanism—Lives with a relative at Caen—Her interest in the Revolution and in the Girondist insurrection—She attends Girondist meetings and is persuaded that Marat is ruining his country—Preparations for her journey to Paris—Her arrival on the 11th of July, 1793—How she passed her time on the 12th and 13th—Her letters to Marat—Marat's home—His precautions against assassination—Charlotte admitted to his room—Their conversation—The blow is struck—The scenes that followed—Charlotte's cross-examination in the house—Her transference to the Abbaye prison—Letters written in prison—Her portraits—Her orderliness—Her trial—Her condemnation—Last hours—Her execution—Her men admirers—The infatuation of Adam Lux—Charlotte's memory execrated by the majority of Revolution women—The effect of her deed on the Girondist Party 186

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN AND RELIGION

The religious experiments of the Revolution—How far women took part in them—The religious opinions of Charlotte Corday, Mme Roland, Mme de Staël, and Mme Jullien—A sermon at Saint Eustache—The marriage of ex-nuns—A Revolution christening—Camille Desmoulins the first Parisian to be content with the Civil Registration of his child—Lucile Desmoulins—Her doubts and prayers—Her husband's imprisonment and his letters to her—Her arrest—Camille's last words and his last letter to her—Her execution—Mme Duplessis' letter to Robespierre—Women and the new religion of *Civisme*—Marat's marriage—The religion of Reason—Goddesses of Reason—The ceremony at Notre Dame—Who were the Goddesses of Reason?—Robespierre and women—The cult of Robespierre—The affair of Catherine Théot—How far was Robespierre involved in the affair?—The story of the mystic Catherine Labrousse—Patriotism the religion that dominated throughout the Revolution . . 204

CHAPTER X

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WOMEN'S PARTY

Feminism before the Revolution, in France and elsewhere—Condorcet advocates Women's Suffrage—But only on a

CONTENTS

PAGE

very limited property basis—Certain women have votes when the Revolution breaks out—Other men advocates of Women's Suffrage—Leading Women Suffragists—Etta Palm von Ælders, Olympe de Gouges, Théroigne de Méricourt, Claire Lacombe—Feminism and Anti-Feminism at " le Cercle Social "—A Feminist deputation to the Legislative Assembly—Was Etta Palm a Prussian spy? —Her disappearance from France—Olympe the High Priestess of Feminism—Preaches Feminism to the Assembly—Placards Paris with Feminist manifestos—Her " Declaration of the Rights of Woman "—Her ideas of marriage — Her quarrel with Robespierre and the Jacobins—Her arrest—Her writings in prison—Her trial — Her execution — The Feminism of Théroigne de Méricourt contrasted with that of Olympe — Women's rights discussed at Théroigne's house—Théroigne refused a consultative vote in the Cordeliers District Assembly —Her speeches at cafés and in the Palais Royal Gardens —She becomes unpopular at the Jacobin Club—Is accused of raising a riot in the Faubourg St. Antoine—Grows more and more violent—Loses her good looks—Her conduct on the 10th of August, 1792—Is jeered at in the Jacobin Club—Her association with les Girondins—Is flogged by market women on the Feuillants Terrace—Loses her reason and dies in a lunatic asylum—The Feminism of Claire Lacombe—Her connection with the Socialists of that period—Is accused of *Modérantisme*—Leads a deputation to the Convention — Supports the Jacobins in their conflict with les Girondins—Is the moving spirit of the Club of Republican Revolutionary Women—Character of the club and its members—The Jacobins openly declare their hostility to Lacombe and her party—The Convention excludes women from its galleries — Women slighted in other ways — Lacombe president of the Women's Republican Revolutionary Club —Her attempt to obtain the release of prisoners—Her denunciation in the Jacobin Club—Disorderly scene at the Jacobins destroys any prestige left to Lacombe and her club—The Convention rejects a petition for its suppression—The Women's Riot—Its cause—Disorderly action of the Women's Club leads to the suppression of all women's clubs and societies by the Convention—Women declared incapable of exercising political rights —The women's protest in the Commune—The end of Claire Lacombe as far as we know it—Causes of the failure of the Women's Movement—Did women gain nothing from the Revolution? . . . . .

INDEX 277

INTRODUCTION

Les femmes furent à l'avant garde de notre Révolution—
Il ne faut pas s'en étonner, elles souffraient davantage.
—Michelet, *Les Femmes de la Révolution.*

RIGHT down the ten centuries of French History there have been few political movements in which women have not played some known part. But never has there been one in which they have been so widely or so intimately associated as with the Revolution.

Mingling in all its most fundamental crises and most vivid scenes we see woman in her infinite variety: women of every type, class and occupation, from the most ignoble to the most noble, from the lowest to the highest: women of every kind of attainment, women of every shade of temperament: women of the street, women of the market, policewomen, blue-stockings, society butterflies, club women, platform women, housewives, mothers of families, actresses, flower girls, servant girls, salon ladies, mystics, prophetesses, goddesses of reason.

Not a tone, not a semi-tone in the whole scale of femininity is unsounded: from the vulgarity and hysteria of *les insulteuses*[1] and *les tricoteuses*,[2] to the culture of a Mme de Staël and the calmness of a Mme Roland.

Differing widely in status and in secondary political opinions, these women were all *ardentes en civisme*

[1] Women of the street paid to insult the condemned on their way to execution.

[2] Women who are said to have knitted round the guillotine. For the origin of the term see *post* p. 36.

as the phrase went then, the baser no doubt frequently because they were paid for it, but others because they were passionately devoted to the public weal.

Their views as to what constituted the public weal varied, of course, according to position, intellect, and training. For the market-women and housewives who took part in the Hunger March to Versailles on the 5th October, 1789, the public weal depended mainly on a plentiful supply at a moderate price of the necessaries of life. For Feminists, like Olympe de Gouges, it depended on the establishment of sex equality; for enthusiastic Girondists, like Charlotte Corday, on the overthrow of a political party and the death of its leader; for democrats, like Mme Robert (Mlle de Kéralio), on the establishment of a republic. And there were a few who had a wider vision, who, although ardent patriots, dreamed of an international brotherhood and of human solidarity. Among these rare spirits were Mme Roland and Mme de Condorcet, who gladly welcomed into their salons and applauded in the Parliament foreigners, like Tom Paine and Anacharsis Clootz. There was also poor Théroigne de Méricourt,[1] the victim of an outrage perpetrated by her own sex, who, even in the ravings of madness, was haunted by an overwhelming desire for unity among classes and factions, and even perhaps among nations.

During this period of national upheaval, while the foundations of society seemed to rock and reel, Frenchwomen displayed a faculty for co-operation and organisation in public matters, which they had never shown before, and which they have seldom displayed since. Nowadays, as they are the first to admit, they lag far behind their British sisters in this matter. A proof of it came to my knowledge only the other day, when an international group of professional women,

[1] I have adopted throughout the French name for this Revolutionary heroine because she might hardly be recognised under her more correct Belgian appellation of "Terwagne of Marcourt."

applying for help to a distinguished Frenchwoman, received the reply that she was too much occupied by her own profession and her own family to take any part in the movement.

Mme Roland was an excellent *maîtresse de maison*, and yet she never permitted her household duties to occupy her more than two hours a day: she was her husband's secretary, but she also found time to be the leader of a political party. She was a woman of letters, but when her husband was in ill health she found time to prepare all his meals with her own hand. Anyone engaged in public work knows that it is always the most occupied who can find time to take on more work, for the obvious reason that the more one has to do the better one has to organise. Many a woman of the Revolution besides Mme Roland made this discovery. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the woman's movement,[1] during the four years which followed the fall of the Bastille, attained proportions which in France it has never reached since.

These four years present us, as we shall see in the last chapter of this book, with a complete drama of Feminism in four acts: its dawn in the writings of that apostle of sex equality, Condorcet;[2] its zenith in the influence exercised by women in the Revolution clubs and societies; its decline when women fell into disfavour with Robespierre and his colleagues; finally its collapse when the Anti-Feminists of the Convention closed the women's clubs and began to lay the foundations of the Napoleonic Code, which was to constitute the most serious reverse ever suffered by the woman's cause in any country.

But the majority of the Revolution women were far from being Feminists, like Olympe de Gouges and Claire Lacombe, or Anti-Feminists like Mme Roland

[1] Though Mme Roland, as we shall see, was by no means a Feminist.

[2] See *post*, pp. 236-75.

and Thérèse Cabarrus.[1] Most of them were too concerned with the wider human interest to give Feminism or Anti-Feminism a thought.

A conspicuous few supported the Revolution by methods which were new as far as women were concerned: they organised women's clubs, harangued Parliament, and spoke on public platforms. A still smaller group shouldered arms, and one even wielded the assassin's knife. But the majority were content to tread the more beaten tracks: to exert their influence through their menfolk, to bring up their children in revolution principles, to knit socks and red Phrygian caps for their heroes, to make lint and bandages for the wounded, to nurse in hospitals, to encourage their men even in the darkest days by organising fêtes, banquets, processions and patriotic plays, to beguile the tediousness of club meetings with songs, music and dancing, to sacrifice on the altar of *la patrie* their money and their jewels, and when the need came to exercise that one political privilege which was never denied to them, to offer up their own lives on the scaffold. Clever women of the leisured classes continued, as long as they were permitted, to exercise their influence in the time-honoured French way of the salon. These Revolution drawing-rooms served as a meeting-place for the leaders of the various factions, and in them many an important programme was drawn up and decisive incident planned.

At the opposite end of the social scale the hooligan women of Paris foregathered in the Palais Royal and Tuileries Gardens, and in the various markets of the metropolis. There they were always ready to raise a riot whenever the Commune or the Sections or one of the clubs required it.

In the early years of the Revolution, women's assistance of every kind was constantly solicited by the men's leaders, some of whom in those days were

[1] Afterwards Mme Tallien.

distinctly Feminist in their sympathies. The Abbé Sieyès would have given women Parliamentary votes. Condorcet would have gone further and made a small number eligible for Parliament.

The Jacobin Club entrusted to women highly important political missions. The Cordeliers Club listened entranced to feminine oratory; and in that art members of the Convention took private lessons from actresses. The Commune stooped to employ the lowest of women as *insulteuses* paid to hurl gibes at the condemned as they passed through the streets on their way to the guillotine. Even later, in 1794, when it was a question of defending Robespierre on the 9th of Thermidor, his faithful friend, Fleuriot Lescot, demanded from the Jacobin Club *de solides gaillards* (robust fellows) *femmes comprises* (including women). During the first years of the Revolution women were honoured for services rendered; medals were struck to commemorate their achievements. A banner was given them behind which they were to march to public ceremonies, and on the banner was worked the motto: "Thus they drove the vile tyrant like a prey before them."

This honourable treatment continued as long as women were content to follow meekly in the wake of their lords and masters. But, as the Revolution proceeded, and as the women's political education progressed, they committed the unpardonable sin: they began to hold opinions of their own, they dared to criticise their masculine fellow-workers, not sparing the Incorruptible himself, the Robespierre whom they had formerly deified. Henceforth in the opinion of their masculine fellow-workers they could do nothing right: they were too hot or too cold, too extreme or too moderate, too cruel or too lenient. They must be got rid of, banished from the political scene, thrust down and kept in a subordinate position.

On the 30th of October, 1793, the National Convention suppressed all women's clubs and societies.

In the same year it closed their salons. On the 9th of November, it met to discuss whether women were capable of exercising political rights. The *Ancien Régime*, be it noted, had never denied this capacity. From King Philippe le Bel's convocation of the first States-General in 1302, down to their meeting on the eve of the Revolution, women of property had from time to time not only voted for local and central assemblies, but now and again, as in the case of Mme de Sévigné, had sat and deliberated in provincial parliaments.[1] Now after five centuries women were to lose this right.

With women's help the Jacobin members of the National Convention had triumphed over their political enemies. They could now afford to dispense with feminine assistance.

Of the two champions of women's rights during the early years of the Revolution, Condorcet was in hiding, and Sieyès, who had been the orator of the Constituent Assembly in the Convention, had forsaken the platform for the silent benches of *le Marais*.[2]

When the proposal to deprive women of political rights was brought forward, only one comparatively unimportant member spoke against it. With unconscious irony, these tempestuous administrators of the Terror argued that the one essential qualification for all who would take part in politics is the possession of "imperturbable equanimity." It was impossible for women ever to attain to the eventual element of calm. For women, therefore, there was no room in politics. Once and for ever the gentlemen of the imperturbable sex slammed the doors of citizenship in women's faces.

And with what result? Did the Revolution,

[1] See Professor Aulard, *Le Féminisme pendant la Révolution*, article in la *Revue Bleue*, March, 1898.

[2] The members who sat in *le Marais* were the ineffectuals who looked on at the strife between the Jacobin *Montagne* and *la Gironde*.

purified from women's direct influence, at once regain its balance? Let those who would know read the record of the Convention during the next six months, down to Robespierre's execution.

So much for the effect of this measure on the Government. As for its effect on women themselves, we have only to look at the type of woman who prevailed during the Directory—irresponsible, empty-headed and frivolous. The Directory woman, say the De Goncourts, fleeing from the seriousness that had attempted to Romanise and Spartacise her, became a "courtesan." "The women of the Directory drew France towards their patron, pleasure. Soon they were the mistresses, the queens of a country which was plunging into luxury, diamonds, festivity and gallantry. . . . That country fell a prey to pillow government."

Napoleon married a typical Directory woman, Joséphine Beauharnais, whom he had met in a typical Directory salon, that of Thérèse Cabarrus, then Mme Tallien. Faced with Joséphine's debts, harassed by her *amours*, Napoleon became convinced of the utter irresponsibility of woman. He had no doubt that if social order were to be secured, every woman must be as much the property of some man as "a gooseberry bush is the property of the gardener." Consequently, Article 312 of le Code Napoléon decrees that a wife shall obey her husband.[1] At Fontainebleau, or some other museum, there is, or was, I hear, the leather armchair in which Napoleon used to sit when discussing the draft Code with his counsellors. The leather cushions are terribly torn and slashed. Each rent represents a gash inflicted by this Anti-feminist in

[1] Article 148 provides that in cases where the permission of parents is necessary for a marriage, if they disagree, the father's permission shall suffice. Article 215 forbids a woman to enter into any legal proceedings without her husband's consent. Article 37 renders her incapable of witnessing any official document. Article 373 gives the father alone authority over the child until his or her majority.

his fury at his counsellors' attempts to persuade him to alter the draft of the articles in woman's favour. The articles remained as Napoleon had planned them. The Code, which deprived Frenchmen of many political rights acquired during the Revolution, compensated them by making them tyrants in their own homes.

CHAPTER I

WOMEN AGITATORS

From the Place de la Bastille to the Château of Versailles

"... The inert
Were roused and lively natures rapt away."
—*Wordsworth.*

It is creditable to the women of the Revolution that their first gesture was one of pity. The fact that the pity was misplaced, lavished on an unworthy object, an impostor, none other than the so-called Latude, a prisoner in the Bastille, does not lessen its merit. Neither need the date of this gesture, some years before the Revolution, exclude it from these pages, for it exercised a determining influence upon the course of the movement.

Every reader of history knows that many a new era has been born of a misapprehension, of some *mensonge grand et saint! glorieuse imposture.* The story of the Revolution is full of myths and legends, producing important crises and events. Among these fictions not the least determining were those that centred in the Bastille.[1] By the time the Revolution broke out this feudal fortress had almost fallen into disuse. It contained only a few prisoners, some of whom lived there in great comfort, in well-furnished rooms, ordering their own food and their own clothing. On one occasion Paris shops were ransacked for flowered silk of a certain pattern required by a lady

[1] See Funck Brentano, *Légendes de la Bastille.*

prisoner in the Bastille. This was fact. Fiction painted a very different picture. It showed a dungeon, *l'enfer de la Bastille*, crowded with the King's enemies, who languished there in conditions of indescribable horror. That this imaginary picture was the one imprinted on the mind of the French nation was largely due to a woman, to a woman of the lower middle class, one Mme Legros, the wife of a Parisian shopkeeper, whether a grocer or a haberdasher seems doubtful.

It was a mere accident that aroused Mme Legros' interest in the Bastille. Walking one day down the street, called les Fossés (the dykes) of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, her eye fell on a piece of paper lying on the ground. She picked it up, and saw it was covered with writing. This she read and found to be the complaint of a prisoner, one Henri Maser, Marquis de Latude, who for thirty-five years, so said the paper, had suffered unjust imprisonment in the Bastille and other dungeons.

Mme Legros, seized with pity, took the paper home, showed it to her husband, and together they resolved not to rest until the prisoner was set free. They got into communication with Latude, and, with amazing courage and enterprise, started an agitation for his release. Mme Legros, we are told, had, like Sterne's lady in the glove-shop, been in the habit of talking pleasantly on all manner of subjects to her husband's customers. To them and to others she now began to talk about Latude. For the purpose of expatiating on his misery she made acquaintances wherever she could, especially with servants in the houses of the great. Thus, at length, she gained access to influential people. One of these was the Cardinal de Rohan. This Prince of the Church was induced to take an interest in the prisoner. He spoke of Latude to his friends. In that sentimental, tearful age, the wave of compassion quickly rose and spread. It spread from house to house, as Mme Legros, in

her shabby clothes, told the prisoner's tale and distributed in the most influential quarters the particulars of his sufferings described by himself. She was immensely aided by her protégé's eloquence. Latude was an adept at painting his woes in lurid colours. Indeed, he had spent the greater part of his life in doing nothing else. His story, as he told it, was irresistible. Great ladies, Mme de Luxembourg, Mme de Boufflers, dissolved in tears as they read it. The wife of the Comptroller General, Mme Necker, and her brilliant daughter, Mme de Staël, became the prisoner's advocates. The French Academy took up his case. Its perpetual secretary, D'Alembert, the great philosopher, waxed indignant as he meditated on Latude's sufferings. Not Paris alone, but the Provinces, joined in Mme Legros' campaign of mercy. Finally, the Queen, Marie Antoinette herself, was touched. She pleaded for Latude with the King.

But here Mme Legros experienced her first rebuff. She and her friends had heard of le Marquis de Latude's marvellous escapes from the Bastille and Vincennes. They knew about the ingenious ladder, one hundred and eighty feet long, which he and his fellow-prisoner had made out of pieces of wood and shreds of their own clothing. But Louis, when he came to read Latude's *dossier*, knew much more than this. *He* knew that the so-called Marquis de Latude was in reality a penniless army barber, Danry by name, a wild impostor, who, as the result of an absurd stratagem designed to bring him to the notice of Mme de Pompadour, had found himself lodged in the Bastille, where he had been kept in great comfort at the Crown's expense. Louis knew more still; for he read that more than once the pseudo Latude had lost the chance of release by haggling over the sum to be paid him in compensation for his alleged sufferings. Louis, moreover, was, from his personal knowledge, aware that Latude had actually been set free in 1777, but that he had made such a bad use of his liberty,

extorting money from helpless females by threats, and making false charges against Louis' ministers, that it had been necessary to re-arrest him. In face of these facts, Louis decided that Latude had best remain where he was. This was a terrible blow. All the agitators were discouraged, except one: that was Mme Legros. She placed her hopes in the Queen; and she was not disappointed. Soon afterwards, the Queen's favourite Minister, De Breteuil, came into office. What arguments he used with the King we do not know. But Louis relented. Latude was set at liberty. But, as a condition of freedom, he was to go into exile. That was not enough for the irrepressible Mme Legros. Again she agitated. Again the King allowed himself to be persuaded. The penalty of exile was removed. Mme Legros was permitted to receive her protégé into her own house. Latude was now a hero, and his liberatress a heroine. They both became the fashion. So much so that Mesdames de Staël, de Luxembourg, and de Boufflers condescended to dine with Latude at the Legros' humble board. The lapse of years only increased their renown. As late as the 26th of January, 1792, a member of the Legislative Assembly declared that no foreigner came to Paris without visiting them. *Le Quatorze Juillet*, the day of the capture of Latude's prison, the Bastille, is still regarded as the most glorious in the Republican annals of France. Throughout the Revolution *les vainqueurs de la Bastille*, as all those who had taken part in the 14th of July insurrection were called, were fêted and honoured as national heroes.

Nothing availed to dissipate the myth: not even the discovery that the fortress, far from being crowded with victims of tyranny, contained not a single political prisoner, only seven prisoners in all: four forgers, two madmen, and one victim of sadism.

Until recent years Mme Legros' tale of Latude's sufferings in the Bastille continued to be believed,

and to be related as gospel by Republican historians, such as Louis Blanc[1] and Michelet.[2]

Even as late as the Exhibition of 1889, in the model of the Bastille, there was exhibited, personating Latude, a white-haired old man, lying in chains on a bed of straw, and groaning horribly. "Here," the guide would say, "you behold, ladies and gentlemen, the unhappy Latude, who remained in this position with his hands chained behind his back for thirty-five years." "Yes," rejoined one of the visitors to the Exhibition, "and in that position Latude made the ladder one hundred and eighty feet long, by which he escaped."

Women are said to be more gullible than men. They are, at any rate, more easily moved to pity. Multitudes of men believed Latude's story. But it was the women who could not rest until he was set free. The very mention of the Bastille raised an image of dread in every sensitive Frenchwoman's mind. At the citadel's capture and demolition, women were present in large numbers. Mme de Genlis, who had brought her pupils, the Duke of Orléans' children, to watch it, said she saw women helping to pull down the towers. Fashionable women were there, as well as women of the mob. The elegant dames left their carriages some little distance away, and walked on to the Square. Chancellor Pasquier found standing close to him Mlle Contat, a famous actress of the Comédie Française.[3] "We all stayed till the end," he writes, "and I gave her my arm to escort her to her carriage in the Place Royale."[4]

In the records of the Musée des Archives Nation-

[1] *Histoire de la Révolution Française.*

[2] *Les Femmes de la Révolution—ed. cit.* Michelet's story bristles with inaccuracies. For example, he makes Mme Legros die before the capture of la Bastille (p. 13).

[3] 1760-1813. She had made her reputation some years earlier as Suzanne in *Le Mariage de Figaro.*

[4] Now la Place des Vosges, about ten minutes walk from la Place de la Bastille.

ales, among the names of the men honoured as *vainqueurs de la Bastille*, stands the name of one woman, and one only, Marie Charpentier.

Among the many myths circling around the fortress and its capture is the story that Théroigne de Méricourt, Carlyle's "brown, eloquent beauty," having seized arms at les Invalides, came to the Bastille and took possession of a tower. But alas! Théroigne's most recent biographer, M. Léopold Lacour,[1] cuts away the foundations from this romantic tale, although it was told by Lamartine, Michelet, the De Goncourts, and another of Théroigne's late biographers, M. Marcellin Pellet.[2]

Women, whatever part they may have played on *le Quatorze Juillet*, kept up their interest in the Bastille. They bought its stones as relics. A pound of them was sold for as much as a pound of bread, no small sum in those days of food scarcity. Our fellow-countrywoman, Henrietta Maria Williams, when she went to see Mme de Genlis at St. Leu, found her wearing as her chief ornament one of these Bastille stones. Nestling in a rosette of tricolour ribbons it was set in precious gems, and crowned with a wreath of laurels.

If it was pity that first brought women into the Revolution, another impulse equally potent to provoke revolutionary action, and even more characteristic of Frenchwomen, indeed of housekeepers all the world over, kept them there: this was the economic impulse, the bread and cheese question.

Thus, on the eve of the Revolution, we find Parisian women protesting to the King against men's usurpation of women's trades. "If only men will leave us the needle and the distaff," ran the women's petition, "we will leave them the plane and the awl."

[1] *Trois Femmes de la Révolution*, 1900.
[2] *Etude Historique et Biographique sur Théroigne de Méricourt*, 1886.

It was this bread and cheese question that made it possible to organise that women's manifestation, the march to Versailles on the 5th and 6th of October, which was the second great insurrection of the Revolution.

Hunger, *le pain qui manque*, wrote the De Goncourts,[1] was at the bottom of all the early dramas of the Revolution; and, whatever else it may have been, the October Procession was certainly a Hunger March.[2]

The corn problem was one of the many disastrous legacies left by that evil genius of his country, Louis XV. Turgot had tried to solve the problem by attempting to establish something like Free Trade, Necker by reverting to Protection. Neither the one nor the other had improved matters, and bad harvests made them worse. The queues outside bakers' shops began in the early hours, lasted through the morning, and sometimes on into the afternoon. Profiteers were charged with throwing loads of grain into quarries instead of delivering them to the populace of Paris. The clergy were said to be bribing millers not to grind their corn. "What is the price of the loaf?" a foreigner inquired of a Parisian working-man's wife. "Three francs twelve sous the four-pound loaf," was her reply. The sum sounds incredible. This was how she arrived at it. "The controlled price is twelve sous the four-pound loaf. But you can't buy loaves at that price. My husband is compelled to wait all day long at the baker's door. He loses the day's work, for which he would receive three francs; so the loaf costs three francs twelve sous." As distrust in the monarchy grew, all sorts of wild suspicions came into being. The Government was actually accused of exporting corn and importing poisoned bread to sell at its weight in gold. When minds were capable of

[1] *La Société Française pendant la Révolution*, p. 53.

[2] This is the view of M. Albert Mathiez. See *Les Jours du 5 et 6 Octobre*, in *La Revue Historique*, 1898-99.

believing rumours so extravagant anything might happen.

The October insurrection would seem to have been in part planned, and in part spontaneous. For some weeks politicians had been urging the people to march to Versailles and demand from the King and the Assembly an explanation of the food scarcity, and these agitators are said to have induced women in the Palais Royal Gardens publicly to incite the famished populace to join in the march. Further, they have been accused of paying women to join, and men to disguise themselves as women for the purpose. On the other hand, the immediate cause of the procession would not seem to have been planned; and this immediate cause was no doubt a women's matter: the fraud of a baker in the Saint-Eustache quarter, who was said to have given short measure, to have sold a loaf of one pound nine ounces, which purported to be one of two pounds. Only by the skin of his teeth did this baker escape being hanged from the nearest lamp-post. He was rescued by a detachment of the National Guard. They hurried him to the Hôtel de Ville, to which he was followed by the infuriated housewives and market-women of Saint-Eustache. The story of their grievance had spread like wild-fire through the working-class quarters. And soon on the Place de Grève an angry mob was surging round the Hôtel de Ville. The malcontents forced their way into the building. Some say they made it the stronghold of femininity, refusing to admit any who were not of their own sex. But masculine force burst open a side door. There was a scene of terrible confusion. Two of the women with lighted torches were about to set fire to the municipal archives, when Stanislas Maillard, an usher at Le Châtelet Law Court, had an inspiration. It saved the town hall, and it led to much else. *Allons à Versailles!* he cried. Seizing a drum, " beating sharp with loud rolls, the tall, gaunt figure, in an ill-fitting suit of black, rushed down the town hall

staircase, shouting loudly, *à Versailles!*" The idea took at once. The town hall and the cheating, trembling baker were forgotten. After all, was not the King himself at the bottom of this trouble? Was it not from him that bread should be demanded? Surely he was the head baker! What was he doing out there at Versailles sheltering behind his Flanders regiment? Ought he not to be in Paris among his starving people? To Paris he should come, and the housewives would bring him there. So along the quays, past the Louvre, past the Tuileries Gardens, towards Versailles, they swarmed in the rain and mist of that October morning, those *ménagères*. At the start there were only about five hundred of them, not eight to ten thousand as many have alleged.[1]

As in all such processions, there were the serious processionists, who desired a definite object, and there were the mere roughs, who wanted a riot and hoped somehow to benefit by it. There were also among these Hunger Marchers women of various occupations: housewives, women of the markets, of *les Halles*, of Saint Catherine's Market, and Saint Paul's. There were lace-makers, flower-sellers, and no doubt women of the street.

Maillard with his drum led the way. Before him went a banner, from which hung bakers' scales. Behind him came the women armed with spits, broomsticks, and any other implement of peace or of war which happened to be handy.[2] Crowds of roughs joined them on the way; peaceable citizens were compelled to join; and by the time they reached

[1] Compare Marc de Villiers, *Reine Audu* (*Les Légendes des Journées d'Octobre*), pp. 22-27, with Michelet, *Femmes de la Révolution*, p. 26, and Buchez et Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution*, vol. III, p. 74, and *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, vol. III, p. 365, which refers to *cette armée de dix mille Judiths allant couper la tête à Holopherne.*

[2] See numerous prints of the time, notably in la Collection Hennin in la Galerie des Estampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Some of these have been reproduced by Armand Dayot in his *Révolution Française.*

Sèvres the procession of five hundred had swollen to such proportions that messengers galloped to the National Assembly with the news that Paris was marching on Versailles. These tidings, borne to the King, who, as usual, was pursuing his ancestral pastime of the chase in Meudon Woods, rapidly brought the monarch home to his palace. And there he was when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the bedraggled horde reached Versailles, and came to the Hôtel des Menus Plaisirs, where the National Assembly was in session. Maillard succeeded in obtaining permission for himself and fifteen of the petitioners to present their grievances to the Parliament. Maillard entered with a woman on each side, one brandishing a sword, the other bearing a pike, at the end of which was something round, whether it were a drum or a picture representing some indistinguishable object—perhaps the bakers' scales again —no one could make out.

Maillard had, with great difficulty, persuaded the remainder of the crowd to stay out of doors. But soon they grew impatient of waiting in the rain. What had happened to their spokesmen, they asked. Had they been poisoned? Some of the most curious contrived to effect an entrance, others followed; soon the galleries were crowded; and in the body of the hall dishevelled market-women in dripping garments occupied benches reserved for deputies. There they listened to Maillard demanding the withdrawal from Versailles of the unpopular Flanders regiment,[1] as being one thousand unnecessary mouths in that time of scarcity. But when he went on to protest against the high price of the loaf, and the impossibility of obtaining it without standing for hours in a queue outside the baker's shop, the housewives in the hall thought they could tell that tale better than he. Refusing to remain mere listeners any longer, they burst in, all speaking at once, and crying out that the

[1] Quartered there for the Court's protection.

Assembly must fix the price of bread at two sous the pound, and that of meat at eight sous the pound.[1] The cry known as "the three-eights" then went round, eight sous for the four-pound loaf, eight sous a pound of meat, eight sous a litre of wine. A certain amount of satisfaction ensued, when another eight occurred; at eight o'clock in the evening a deputy, Dr. Guillotin,[2] announced that loads of corn would immediately be despatched to Paris. Thereupon Maillard and sixty of the most orderly manifestants went home. Those who remained were not so rational. They soon abandoned their reasonable demands for the lowering of the price of food, and began to insult the clergy. A large number of the members withdrew. When the President, Mounier, entered the hall at ten o'clock he found only ten deputies surrounded by five hundred women, one of whom, a gigantic mænad of the market, occupied the President's chair, where she was ringing his bell loudly.

Mounier had withdrawn earlier in the day in order to conduct a company of women to the royal presence. The King received them in his famous clock-room. As to the number to whom this privilege was accorded, there is considerable divergence of opinion. It varies from five to twelve. But all authorities agree in making a pretty young girl of seventeen, Louison Chabry, flower-seller or worker in sculpture, or possibly both, the heroine of the occasion. Someone has even gone so far as to reproduce, or perhaps to imagine, her discourse. Whatever she said or did not say, she did not touch on politics. Perhaps she had none then. But they soon became very pronounced. For she apparently looked so charming and spoke so prettily that, when she was about to kiss the King's hand, he kissed her on both cheeks, saying she was

[1] Marc de Villiers, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[2] He was the first to suggest decapitation by means of some instrument like that which ultimately bore his name, though it was constructed by a German mechanic under the direction of Dr. Louis, Secretary of the Academy of Surgery.

well worth it (*qu'elle en valait bien la peine*). Of course that made her at once a staunch Royalist. There seems to be better authority for this story than for another version of the incident, viz., that, embarrassed by the monarch's august presence, the oratress of the deputation, after murmuring the one word *pain*, fell into a swoon, from which she awoke to find herself in a hardly less embarrassing situation—still surrounded by her fellow-delegates, but in her sovereign's arms.[1]

Whatever happened to the pretty flower-girl, the deputation seems to have been successful. Highly pleased with their reception, and with the promises the King had given them, they left the palace crying, "Long live the King!" But their comrades, waiting anxiously in the rain on the Place d'Armes, were somewhat critical, not to say jealous. "Have you anything in writing?" they clamoured. And when the deputation had to confess to having received nothing but some excellent wine, the royal salute, and the royal word, certain of their fellow-processioners grew furious. Taking off their garters, they would have suspended the deputation from the nearest lamp-posts had it not been for the intervention of their less violent sisters and of the Maréchal du Logis, who led the petitioners back to the château. There they were delivered from such dangers in the future by receiving a paper signed by the royal hand. It recorded the King's promise that loads of corn, destined for Paris and said to be held up at Lagny and Senlis, should be immediately transported into the capital, and that every possible measure should be taken for the provisioning of the metropolis. Provided with this royal charter, the deputation was now permitted to leave the palace in peace. Its leader, Louison Chabry, and sixty other women, no doubt the more respectable of the manifestants, were then glad to

[1] See Michelet, *Femmes de la Révolution*, p. 33, Carlyle, *French Revolution*, ed. Chapman and Hall, 1837, vol. I, p. 231.

return to Paris in carriages, which the Court provided for them. They did well, for two or three of them had already been badly hurt in scrimmages outside the palace.

Louison was the first to reach Paris. She came into the Hôtel de Ville at two in the morning. The others followed at intervals. Maillard arrived at four. He bore the King's promises in writing, and handed them to the Mayor, Bailly. The women were utterly exhausted by fatigue and hunger. They asked for food, and were given a supper—or rather breakfast—of meat, bread, and rice, in a room adjoining the Council Chamber.

The hooligans alone remained at Versailles. Many of these, as we have said, passed the night in the Assembly Hall. Others slept in the stables. Some even penetrated into the royal kitchens; and at six the next morning their strident, menacing voices ascended from the terrace of the palace gardens to the Queen's bedchamber.

With the well-known tragic events that followed during the next few hours we are not here concerned, for the women played no very prominent part in them though they mingled in the hostile crowd. Later in the morning they were in the Marble Court when the Queen, who had narrowly escaped assassination at male hands, came out on to the balcony. At half-past one they set forth in triumph on the return journey to Paris. They had achieved their object: they brought with them, not only sixty wagons full of corn, but the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's little boy—in other words, the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. A motley crowd they were still, those Parisian processionists. But their aspect was different from that of the day before. Then they were suppliants. Now they were conquerors. *Le bon papa*, as they called the King, whom they had captured, was not very clever, they said. But his wife, the Austrian woman, whom they hated, had

misled him. They, the good women of Paris, would look after him henceforth. So they were in excellent spirits. Their spits and broomsticks they had exchanged for tree branches tied with ribbons which once had adorned the elaborate coiffures of court ladies. Many of them wore helmets and armour belonging to the guards. Some rode in warlike fashion astride of cannon. Among immense crowds of onlookers they conducted the King and Queen to the Hôtel de Ville, which it took them seven interminable hours to reach. And even then the Via Dolorosa was not at an end. Not content with the appearance of their sovereigns on the balcony, and the King's assurance of the pleasure it gave him once more to be in the midst of his loyal subjects, those subjects refused to go home to rest until, at ten o'clock, they had seen the royal captives safely lodged in what henceforth became the prison of royalty, the palace of the Tuileries.

In following the conduct of the processionists after the 6th of October, we again have to distinguish between the orderly and the disorderly.

This is especially necessary in the case of the market-women (*les poissardes*, or fishwives, as they were called) who in large numbers took part in the procession. They were of two distinct orders. There were the respectable holders of long-established and well-known stalls in the market. Under the old régime these *poissardes* had been respected, even honoured by royalty. The King received them on fête days, accepted the nosegays they offered, listened to their *Billinsgate* talk and reserved for them special seats at royal pageants.[1] Then there were the women roughs of the market, the loafers and hangers-on: *vestales terribles, bacchantes soûles du nouveau dieu Liber*[2] (drunken bacchantes of the new god Liberty).

[1] De Goncourt, *La Civilisation Française pendant la Révolution*, p. 382.
[2] *Ibid.*

They threw themselves with fury into the Revolution; they took part in every riot, and hesitated at no atrocity. They filled the streets; they overflowed into the Tuileries Gardens, "roaring like lionesses deprived of their young." The terrace of the Feuillant Monastery and Hottot's café hard-by were the favourite resorts of these vixens, these mænads, breathing forth a smell of brandy and cynical philippics.[1]

After the Versailles Procession these two classes of market-women behaved very differently. The rapscallions allowed the King and Queen no peace. As early as seven o'clock on the 7th of October they gathered in a howling mob outside the Tuileries Palace, clamouring for the Queen to appear, and, when she did so, screaming insults at the Austrian woman, whom they held responsible for all their troubles. Then these viragoes made the round of the Paris shops, appropriating ribbons and other finery, which they claimed as rewards for their so-called patriotism in going to Versailles.

Their more orderly sisters, later in the day and not without respectfully soliciting an audience, also went to the palace, and were admitted. Marie Antoinette herself consented to receive them. Her ladies, thinking the fishwives presumed to come too near Her Majesty, intervened between the visitors and their Queen, and held out their ample paniers to protect her. These orderly market-women were eager to prove that they had nothing in common with their hooligan sisters, whose behaviour they loudly denounced, and some of whom they handed over to the police.

The Municipal Council of Paris also was at first careful to distinguish between the two elements of the Versailles Procession. On the former they bestowed the title of *bonnes citoyennes*. They struck a medal in their honour. They gave them the best boxes at

[1] De Goncourt, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

the theatre, and allowed them to come down on to the stage and dance national dances, which were loudly applauded. But, as the Revolution went on and orderliness ceased to count for much, the hooligans, as well as *les bonnes citoyennes*, in fact all women who had gone to Versailles, were elevated to the rank of national heroines. At a meeting held on the 6th of Nivôse, Year II (i.e., the 23rd of December, 1793), the Commune decreed that, preceded by a banner, inscribed with the words, " thus they drove the tyrant like a vile prey before them,"[1] the heroines of Versailles should march to all public assemblies, and that " there they should knit." This last injunction gave birth to the term *tricoteuses*, that famous designation of revolutionary women. Though received in all seriousness by such notable historians as Carlyle, it is now assigned to the irony of the Anti-Feminist Chaumette, who drew up the official report of the session, and who could not refrain from this joke at the expense of the national heroines.

Whether or no the knitting-needles were so busy—whether or no they were plied in the Gallery of the Jacobin Club, and even round the guillotine, as romantic historians try to make out, the term *tricoteuses* had come to stay. Henceforth " *les bonnes citoyennes* " were known as " the knitters."

Not many names of individual women who took part in the procession have come down to us. We have already mentioned Louison Chabry, who led the deputation to the King. Very little is known about her. Even her Christian name is doubtful. Was it Louise or Louison, Madeleine or Marguerite? At any rate, at the time of the procession, she seems to have been living in the Rue Richelieu, and later she was lodging with her father in a wine merchant's house in St. Catherine's Market. She was evidently a kind-hearted girl, for, on the eve of starting for Versailles, she had given twelve francs all but four sous to the

[1] *Ainsi qu'une vile proie elles ont chassé le tyran devant elles.*

prisoners in the Hôtel de Ville for the purchase of shirts and shoes.

She gave evidence at an inquiry into the doings of 5th and 6th of October made by Le Châtelet Law Court at the instance of the Court party. At the Châtelet, Louison, like other witnesses, as we shall see, appeared by no means proud of the part she had played in the affair, and protested that she had been forced to join the procession against her will. Later, however, she seems to have changed her opinion; and our last sight of her is collecting the offertory at a Te Deum in honour of the Versailles Insurrection in the Church of Les Petits Pères, at which were present la Princesse de Lamballe, the Duke of Chartres and the Duke of Penthièvre.

With Chabry on her deputation are said to have been Marie Nemèry, Rose Baré, a lace-maker, Anne Forest, a shop girl, Françoise Robin, and three other women described as *les dames* Babet, Leclerc and Laviot. Robin, not Chabry, had originally been appointed to lead the petitioners. But as, on the arm of Mounier, President of the Assembly, Robin was being escorted to the palace, a Swiss guard kicked her so brutally that her injuries prevented her joining the deputation until later.

The two women who, more than any others, have been associated with the doings of those October days are Théroigne de Méricourt and Renée Audu. The former was one of the most impressive and, in the end, as we shall see,[1] one of the most tragic figures of the Revolution. Legends have clustered thick round her life-story.[2] Lamartine, Michelet, the De Goncourts and Carlyle relate many of them as sober fact. Even those who, like Taine, ignore the myth of "brown-locked Demoiselle Théroigne" seated on a cannon leading the procession to Versailles, assert that she distributed money among the troops on

[1] *Post*, p. 257.
[2] One of them we have already mentioned, *ante*, p. 26.

the square, hoping thus to bribe them to join the Revolution.[1] Poets from Barthélemy to Baudelaire have celebrated Théroigne as the leader of the procession.

"Erect on a cannon as on a shield, she inflamed the ranks with her gestures and her voice," sang Barthélemy. "Lance in hand, hair dishevelled, she marched to danger like Penthesilea."[2]

Baudelaire, in his sonnet, *Sisina*, asked:

Avez-vous vu Théroigne, amante du carnage,
Excitant à l'assaut un peuple sans souliers,
La joue et l'œil en feu, jouant son personnage,
Et montant, sabre au poing, les royaux escaliers.[3]

Of all these picturesque myths, Théroigne's latest biographer, M. Léopold Lacour, who derives his story from Théroigne's own confessions,[4] makes short work. As one reads his closely reasoned argument, one begins to wonder whether he will allow Théroigne to have been at Versailles at all, or even whether he will leave us anything of our martial heroine to believe in. Let us now see how much of her remains in Lacour's narrative.

Anne Josephe du Terwagne, commonly known by

[1] *Dans les rangs du régiment qui est en bataille sur la place, Théroigne, en veste rouge d'Amazone, distribue de l'argent. Origines de la France Contemporaine* (ed. Paris, 1909). *L'Anarchie* (vol. I, p. 158).

[2] *Debout sur un cannon comme sur son pavois,*
Elle exalte les rangs du geste et de la voix.
Une lance à la main, la tête échevelée,
Elle marche, aux périls comme Penthésilée.
—*Douze Journées de la Révolution*, 1835.

[3] Have you seen Théroigne, in love with carnage, with flaming eye and cheek, urging on to the assault a barefooted people, playing her part, and, sword in hand, ascending the royal staircase.

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 93-313. In the chapters on Théroigne, the author minutely examines the sources from which previous biographers had derived their information, and compares them with a book the existence of which had been unknown to them. Entitled *Les Confessions de Théroigne de Méricourt, la Belle Liégeoise*, it had been shown to M. Lacour by the keeper of the Imperial Archives at Vienna. With other important matter, it contained Théroigne's replies to the cross-examination to which she was subjected on her arrest and imprisonment in 1791.

the name of Théroigne, which was her usual signature, was born in 1769 at Marcourt, not Méricourt, a village on the Luxembourg and Belgian frontier, not very far from Liège. Her father was a well-to-do peasant farmer. Her mother died when she was five. After her father's second marriage, Théroigne and two brothers were left to the care of their stepmother, whose unkindness drove them from home to take refuge with relatives; but here, apparently, they fared no better. So Théroigne, leaving her family, seems to have gone into service at Limburg, where she was employed in keeping cows. Then she suddenly became nursery governess or companion at Liège. Hence Revolution records refer to her as "la belle Liégeoise." For this strange promotion, we suspect Théroigne's good looks to have been partly accountable. Although no authentic portrait of her exists, save one that was made towards the end of her life when she was ill and had lost all her attractiveness, there are numerous detailed descriptions of her appearance, which show that, though not strictly beautiful, she was very pretty, small, *mignonne* and piquante. The dignity of her carriage made her appear almost tall, at any rate above the average height, said one who saw her. Her eyes were dark and flashing, her hair chestnut, and she possessed one of those *retroussé* noses which change the fate of empires.

These governess days of Théroigne are full of mystery. From Liège she would appear to have gone to Antwerp, and thence to England, how, why, and with whom is doubtful. But it is thought that in England she became the mistress of a wealthy English youth, who promised to marry her. Other stories of her life in England, that she became the mistress of the Prince of Wales and was introduced by him to the Duke of Orléans, seem to be doubtful.[1] These

[1] They are so regarded by M. Lacour and even by M. Marcellin Pellet, who is much less critical than M. Lacour.

rumours have been recently used[1] to bolster up the theory that Théroigne was involved in the so-called Orléanist Plot to replace Louis XVI. by his Orléanist cousin. Théroigne, when arrested for taking part in that October procession, which some consider to have been part of this plot, of course took care to deny any acquaintance with the Duke. Her denial may or may not have been true. Théroigne gave her own version of the English episode in her story. This she told to her people at Marcourt after she had left England and returned home with a considerable fortune. She said she had married in England a rich Englishman, of whom she was then the widow. Relying on her relatives' ignorance of English, the crafty Théroigne appears to have produced certain documents signed "Théroigne Spinster," and to have told her family that "Spinster" was the name of her late husband. French biographers, as ignorant of our language as the Terwagnes, have conducted endless researches with the object of identifying this English "Spinster," whom they suppose to have been the father of the child alleged by Théroigne to have been born to her in England, and said to have died in infancy.

More reliable than Théroigne's own story are the numerous records, which show that somewhere about 1787 Théroigne was in Paris; and that there she was receiving the addresses of an elderly French nobleman, Armand Nicholas Doublet, Marquis de Persan, who settled upon her for life an annual income of five thousand francs. He was soon to regret his generosity, for Théroigne, who possessed a fine voice, which had been trained, probably in England, declared her intention of devoting her life to music, and went off to Genoa with a famous Italian singer, Tenducci. Her contract with Tenducci is extant. Here again she signs *Théroigne Spinster*.

[1] See Mrs. Nesta Webster, *The French Revolution, A study in Democracy*, 1919, p. 52.

It seems likely that Théroigne had financial resources other than and in addition to Persan's allowance. This she continued to receive and to apply for, sometimes in advance, in letters to the Parisian banker Perregaux, which, still in existence, form one of the most reliable sources of her biography. As pawnshop records show, she possessed a great store of valuable jewels and plate—gifts, no doubt, from "Mr Spinster"[1] and from other less hypothetical lovers.

Théroigne returned from Genoa in the summer of 1789. She came back a very different woman from the gay courtesan who had set forth with the Italian tenor, from the brilliant Comtesse de Campinados, as she had called herself in days when she was to be seen glittering with jewels in her box at the Paris opera. Now her life as a courtesan was over; she had paid the price of her calling, for in Italy she had contracted the malady that ultimately was to lead her to the Hospital of Salpêtrière. Her beauty was on the wane; her Italian lover had spent the greater part of her money. Her vivacity, intelligence and charm, however, remained for a while longer; and Théroigne proceeded to make the best of them. Unable to continue her old calling, she turned politician and tried, with considerable success, to pose as *une femme savante*. She sought for and made acquaintance with scientists like Romme, politicians like Pétion, and though she failed to attract the Abbé Sieyès to her house, she induced his brother to visit her. Thus, as we shall see later, she opened a salon;[1] and in it, as we shall also see, she founded a club.[2]

Formerly music had been her only serious concern in life. Politics had had no interest for her; but on the morrow of her return from Italy she found herself in the midst of them, for she was lodging in the Hôtel Toulouse near that Palais Royal, or Palais d'Egalité,

[1] *Post*, p. 57.
[2] *Post*, p. 252

as it came to be called, where throughout the Revolution the political cauldron was always at boiling point.

It was here, if we may trust Théroigne's own confession,[1] that she first became interested in the people. Already the Revolution seemed to her to have changed men's hearts, to have banished egoism and obliterated class distinctions. As she looked down on the *poissardes* haranguing the passers-by, even the most ragged seemed to have a heroic air. Here in the Palais Royal Gardens, Théroigne fell in love with Liberty.[2]

The scene that Théroigne saw on the sultry days of that tropical summer of 1789, in some mild way must have resembled our Hyde Park near the Marble Arch on a summer Sunday afternoon. There was the stump orator on a chair. On the fateful 12th of July, when the news arrived of Necker's banishment, the orator was the timid, stammering Camille Desmoulins, who had been forced to mount his impromptu platform. In halting, though passionate accents, he was summoning the people to arms in a social war. "The beast is in the trap," he cried, "now we must finish him. Never did richer prey await victors. Forty thousand palaces, mansions and châteaux, two-fifths of the whole wealth of France will be valour's reward."[3]

On the evening of that day, Théroigne took her first step on the political stage: walking in the streets with her servant, she met a group of soldiers and asked them whether they were on the side of the States-General. That question very nearly hurried her into prison.

[1] Quoted by M. Lacour, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[2] *Elle s'était engouée de liberté, comme on s'engoue d'une espérance, et elle s'était mise à aimer cette fée naissante,* wrote the De Goncourt of revolutionary women in general, *La Société Française pendant la Révolution,* p. 379.

[3] M. Lacour, *op. cit.*, p. 158, doubts whether Théroigne actually heard this speech. M. Marcellin Pellet, *op. cit.*, p. 17, does not suggest a doubt.

On the famous fourteenth, when the news of the capture of the Bastille was announced in the Gardens, Théroigne saw people weeping with joy. Three days later the *ci-devant* Comtesse de Campinados made her first appearance in a political manifestation. Wearing a white riding habit and *un chapeau rond*, she took part in the procession which went to welcome Louis XVI. coming from Versailles to give his blessing to the Revolution's first triumph, the destruction of the royal prison.

By this time Théroigne had thrown herself heart and soul into the Revolution movement. She was reading all the public announcements and newspapers; but she found them difficult to understand. So in order to be in the heart of things, she went to live at Versailles, in la Rue de Noailles. There she spent most of her time listening to the debates of the National Assembly. These also she found somewhat incomprehensible at first. But, as gradually they grew more intelligible, they showed her the people, oppressed by the privileged classes, the people with justice and right on their side.

On the 5th of October, Théroigne was at the Assembly when the approach of the Women's Procession was announced. We have already seen the story that she accompanied Maillard and his draggle-tailed throng from Paris to be nothing but legend. No contemporary evidence corroborates Carlyle's picturesque description of "Demoiselle Théroigne, brown-locked Théroigne, seated on a cannon." The two friends of Liberty in their famous history of the Revolution, do not include Théroigne's name among those of the women processioners. It was not until some months after the event that the scurrilous newspaper *Les Actes des Apôtres* mentioned Théroigne as one of the leaders of the procession.

However negligent Théroigne may have become later, in those October days of 1792 she had far too much regard for her appearance to join her dishevelled

sisters on their mud march. It was much more like the coquette Théroigne still was to keep herself spick and span, to don an appropriate silken riding-habit, red this time, and to caracole on a warlike steed on the Place d'Armes. But alas! even this picture of our heroine historical accuracy relentlessly bids us discard.

Her own account of her doings on the 5th and 6th of October was that, on the Procession's arrival at Versailles, she went out of the Assembly Hall to see what was happening and then, having satisfied her curiosity, retired to her home for the night, taking with her a few miserable women to whom she gave bread. On the following day, so she said, having gone to the Assembly Hall and found the doors closed, she mingled for a while with the crowds on the Square, then when the Hall was opened, returned there and listened to the debates for the rest of the morning. This story may or may not be true. We must remember that when Théroigne told it she was eager to clear herself from the charge of having led the Procession or at any rate played one of the principal parts in it, a charge which was being brought against her by Le Châtelet Law Court, during the inquiry into the events of the 5th and 6th of October, to which we have already referred.

This inquiry opened on the 11th of December, 1789, and continued until the 29th of July, 1790. There seems little doubt that it was instituted by the enemies of the Duke of Orléans and Mirabeau, and with the design of proving them to have been the instigators of the insurrection. During the first six months the evidence of some four hundred witnesses was taken. Among them were the King's aunt, Mme Adelaide, his brother, the Comte de Provence, and even the Queen herself. Marie Antoinette is said to have refused to incriminate any of her husband's subjects. Her evidence was therefore entirely uncompromising. "I saw everything, I heard everything.

I have forgotten everything," she is reported to have declared.

Out of the four hundred witnesses only three said they had seen Théroigne actively engaging in the insurrection; and even these three were vague. One had been told by a lady, whose name he had forgotten, that she had seen among " the brigands who had come from Paris to Versailles " a lady (*une dame*) whom she thought to be " Thérouenne de Montesurt " (*sic*) dressed as a man, with a tall nobleman, dressed as a woman. The second witness, a priest, said that on the evening of the 5th, when the Flanders regiment was in the Avenue de Versailles, " a lady, some say several," wearing a long red coat, " at least as far as could be seen in the darkness," was going up and down the ranks, in her hand a basket, from which the soldiers were taking little packets.

Yet another priest, this one a student in theology, of the Sorbonne, declared that on the night of the 5th, being at the window of the Hôtel Flammarens, Rue de l'Orangerie, he saw arriving several women, and men disguised as women. One of the former he noticed particularly. She was in a scarlet riding-habit, and on horseback; a jockey, also in scarlet, followed her. The witness was told she was Mlle Thérouenne (*sic*) de Méricourt, whom he had previously seen at the Assembly, and whom he recognised later. She went up to the sentinel stationed at the Orangery gate, which the sentinel, who wore the uniform of the Versailles Militia, immediately closed. Everyone, said the witness, believed it to have been closed by order of Mlle Thérouenne.

It was on such slender evidence that Le Châtelet Law Court on the 4th of August, 1790, issued a warrant for Théroigne's arrest. But by that time she was outside the Court's jurisdiction. Whether it was for that express purpose or not that in the preceding May she had gone to her native Marcourt seems uncertain. At any rate, she was out of France, and

the Châtelet made no attempt to obtain her extradition. Whether the Paris Law Court may not have prompted the misfortune which, as we shall see later, was to overtake *la belle Liégeoise* is another matter.

After the first six months, the Châtelet Inquiry had grown less vigorous. The Inquiry had failed in its main object, viz., to inculpate in the October Insurrection d'Orléans and Mirabeau, whose names the Assembly had refused to allow the Commissioners to drag into the affair. Thus, from interminable sittings and an immense mass of evidence, there resulted only one actual arrest, that of a woman, and one so obscure that her very name is doubtful. Whether her Christian name was Renée or Reine or Louise, her family name Leduc or Audu or Ondu, seems impossible to discover.[1] There is no doubt, however, that she was a market-woman, and that because of her good looks she had, according to the time-honoured custom, which still prevails in Paris to-day, been elected "Queen of the Markets," *la Reine des Halles* or *la Reine de Hongrie*, as the title went then. This may account for the appellation of *Reine* or even *Renée*.

There is evidence that already, on the 4th of October Renée, in collaboration with the famous Maillard, with a ragged hunchback, Burnout, and with another, whom Taine calls a "bird of prey,"[2] Fournier, nicknamed "the American," had been working to create a disturbance, and to turn popular attention towards Versailles. Renée's part was to make speeches in the Palais Royal Gardens, and to cry out in the streets that she would go to Versailles and demand from the King and Queen the reason why Paris lacked bread.

[1] See the exhaustive researches of le Baron Marc de Villiers in *La Reine Audu* (1917). Readers of French fiction will be well acquainted with Audu, who is one of the heroines of Boisgobey's novel *Le Demi Monde sous la Terreur.*

[2] *La Conquête Jacobine*, vol. I., chap. xi.

Renée would appear to have been one of the women at Maillard's side when he first entered the Assembly Hall, and she was apparently a member of the disorderly throng who remained behind after the more respectable processioners had returned to Paris. For, says one of the witnesses at the Châtelet Trial, it was *la première dame des Halles*, Reine Audu, who, after the Bishop of Langres had been compelled to put his thumbs on the table as a token of submission to their demands, cried : " Now we are pleased with you, so you must kiss us."[1]

The Châtelet charged Renée with having announced her intention of going to Versailles and bringing back the Queen's head on her sword, with having helped to massacre the King's body-guards, and with having taken part in other disorderly scenes. Her cross-examination opened on the very anniversary of the day of her alleged crimes—the 5th of October, 1790.

When called to the witness-box Queen Audu began by denying her presence at Versailles. However, after the overwhelming testimony of no less than fifty witnesses who swore to having seen her there, had refreshed her memory, she changed her tactics, and like other women whom the Tribunal had interrogated, Louison Chabry, for example, Audu maintained that she had been compelled to join the procession against her will. As she was passing by the Hôtel de Ville, she said, a band of women, some of them very badly dressed, had thrust a broomstick[2] into her hand, and insisted that she should go with them to demand from the King and the Assembly reasons for the scarcity of food. Renée declared that the procession advanced in perfect order. She carefully omitted any reference to

[1] The evidence of one Dufraisse-Duchey. See Baron Le Villiers *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[2] According to other accounts she was armed with a much less domestic weapon, a sword. Broomsticks figure large, however, in the contemporary prints of the procession. See La Collection Hennin in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

her own conduct in the Assembly Hall, or even to her presence there. She said that with other processioners, she had passed the night in the stables of Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois, and that they had slept badly, being constantly roused by the beating of drums. The next morning they went out into the streets and broke their fast on a bag of plums and a bottle of water given them by a soldier of the King's guard. Later, while the mob were invading the château, Audu confessed to having drunk something stronger than water with some gunners of her acquaintance—her sweetheart was said to be a soldier—perhaps he was one of these. Audu did not deny that she was in the crowd that brought the King and the royal family back to Paris. But she resolutely refused to admit that she had been guilty of any crime whatsoever. Thus did this usually garrulous and bombastic person, with affected modesty and restraint, attempt to minimise her achievements in an all-important crisis.

Her counsel, Chenau, when he stood up to plead, told a very different story. And here we actually have an advocate giving the lie to his client. Chenau, aware doubtless that the Tribunal would desire to save its face by making at least one conviction, and that it had chosen this market-woman for a scapegoat, determined if he could not get his client acquitted at least to make a heroine of her, whether she liked it or not. In this he completely succeeded. His speech, adding one more legend to those already enlivening the annals of the Revolution, handed down this well-nigh nameless woman to posterity as a second Joan of Arc.

Chenau represented his client as a noble patriotic woman inflamed with the warlike ardour of her family—were not her five brothers all serving with the colours? Moved with pity for her country's wrongs, this Penthesilea resolved to right them. She had assembled more than eight hundred women in the Champs Elysées, marshalled them in perfect order and led them by way of Sèvres to Versailles. There,

outside the Assembly Hall, she had left four hundred of her band to over-awe the Parliament. With the rest and three cannon brought from Paris she had continued her way to the château and, accompanied by twelve of her comrades,[1] had succeeded in penetrating into the royal presence. But not, said Chenau, until she had passed through many adventures. She had had to tackle the Commander of the Versailles National Guard, Estaing himself, to advance beneath the shot and shell of his troops, to be wounded in the breast and right arm, to push aside or to creep under two infuriated war horses, who in some unaccountable manner had revenged themselves by kicking off Renée's toe-nails. So much suffering and so much courage had not been without its effect on King Louis. When ultimately Audu had reached her Monarch, she had found him all docility and compliance. Without a murmur the King had granted the *poissarde's* request that he would subscribe to the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and reveal the whereabouts of the Government's stores of corn and flour. In triumph Renée and her friends had left the palace. But on the square fresh troubles had beset them. The market queen had again been wounded, this time in the left arm. Utterly exhausted, her mutilated body had been placed on a cannon. After a wakeful night on this martial couch she had been up betimes, and at eight o'clock, despite her wounds and orthopædic disability, had dragged herself a second time to the King to persuade him to grant his people's demands and go with them to Paris instead of fleeing to Metz, which was said to be his intention. Again Louis was compliant. He returned to Paris, and with him on her cannon had gone the lacerated Queen of the Markets. With her arrival at the Hôtel de Ville, said Chenau, her exploits ended.

To such a heroine how could any Tribunal refuse

[1] As we have seen, only five of the processioners were received by the King, and Audu was not among them.

the martyr's crown? The Châtelet condemned Renée to imprisonment, for what period does not transpire. Straightway her fame went forth throughout the length and breadth of the land. The Châtelet was bombarded with petitions for the gallant prisoner's release. And, when on the 6th of September, 1791, after eleven months of a wild agitation on her behalf, Audu was finally liberated, she received an ovation. By that time any woman who had taken part in Versailles Insurrection was considered a national heroine; and among them Audu, as their leader, was of course supreme. Parliament declared her to have deserved well of her country. The Town Council of Paris girded her with the Sword of Honour. The Jacobin Club collected on her behalf 357 francs 5 sous; with which the recipient was not satisfied, considering it far too trivial a sum for so distinguished a deliverer of *la patrie*. Renée clamoured, but in vain, for a pension for life. Its refusal, however, did not prevent her from continuing her martial efforts in the Revolution cause. In the attack on the Tuileries on the 10th of August, 1892, she was again wounded. Soon afterwards the victorious Jacobins began to find the services of women more embarrassing than helpful. Two years later, on the 27th of July, 1794, we find Audu in the prison of Ste. Pélagie for some unknown crime. Her release on the following 5th of September is the last we hear of her. Rumour relates that she died mad.

A critic desiring to make light of women's achievements, will say that their début in the Revolution does not enhance their reputation for intelligence, or show them capable of independent action. He will point out that Mme Legros was the victim of an impostor; that the Versailles processioners were the agents, probably many of them the paid agents, of political agitators, and that even if the women of the 5th and 6th of October sincerely went to Versailles to obtain

food for their hungry families, they failed, because the loads of corn they brought back were but a temporary relief. But another critic, less Anti-Feminist, might reply that women were not alone in believing Latude's story, that, as he lectured and exhibited his ladder throughout France and England, he received enthusiastic applause from masculine audiences: that though economically the Versailles Insurrection did little, politically it achieved its object: it struck a fatal blow at the old absolute monarchy; it brought the King out of the age-long monarchical aloofness of Versailles into Paris, where he was among his people and, more or less, under their control; it made him, in short, the King of the French instead of the King of France. It was this thing that the women had done. "Men took the Bastille (even there the women helped), women took the King," says Michelet. Further, by bringing the King into Paris, women had made Paris the centre of the Revolution and the capital of the New France in a sense in which, for a hundred years and more, it had never been the capital of the Old.

CHAPTER II

SALONS AND SALONNIÈRES

"Woman alone can organise a drawing-room: man succeeds sometimes in a library."—*Benjamin Disraeli*

WHILE in street, market, and on the high road, Frenchwomen of the humbler classes were making history in ways new to their sex, up in the higher walks of society cultured dames were exercising a no less potent influence in the time-honoured French way of the salon.

Sociability is the most characteristic quality of the French nation; and the salon, the incarnation of sociability, is the most typical of French institutions. From the salon, through four centuries, have radiated wit, grace, and gallantry; in a word, the indefinable *esprit français*. The French Renaissance of the sixteenth century owed a debt to the salon which is not usually recognised.[1] In the following century, as we all know, *polite society* in the French sense of the term was cradled in Mme de Rambouillet's Blue Room. Fifty years later, Louis XIV. was framing his policy in Mme de Maintenon's apartments. Fifty years later still, the social philosophy, which was to transform France during the Revolution, was evolving in Mme de Tencin's[2] salon out of the conversation of Montesquieu and the Encyclopædists.

The Revolution, which destroyed so much of *l'ancien régime*, was powerless to destroy the salon.

[1] See *Margaret of France, Duchess of Savoy*, by Winifred Stephens, pp. 116-20.

[2] She was D'Alembert's mother.

It persisted in spite of the Convention's Decree in 1793 abolishing it. "What did you do all that time?" somebody once asked of a member of the Convention, during the period known as the Terror. "I lived," was the reply.[1] While the salon as an institution succeeded in living, many individual salons died. Only one, that of Mme Helvétius, the philosopher's widow, persisted right through without a break from 1772-1800. Some were but temporarily suspended, like the salons of Mme de Condorcet and Mme de Staël; others were closed for ever, like the salon of Mme Roland,[2] when their hostesses were taken away, first to prison, then to the guillotine.

Never did the French passion for sociability assert itself more powerfully than in those tempestuous years. Never was social intercourse felt to be more indispensable than when prison gates closed on salonnière and her guests. Then, within those gates, at the end of some lugubrious corridor in l'Abbaye or la Conciergerie, dimly lit by a few tallow candles, men and women, having dressed with all the care then possible, would assemble to discuss topics of the day, or to try and forget them by composing a madrigal or repeating a *bon mot*. "Why should one be awkward and morose," they would say, "merely because an accident has placed one in uncomfortable quarters?"[3] But, though even in those grimmest days gleams of cheerfulness would keep breaking in, it was inevitable that the rough blast of the Revolution cyclone should fatally nip the fine flower of French wit and gaiety. Well might Talleyrand say that he who had not lived before 1789 could not know the sweetness of life.[4]

One of the greatest charms of the pre-Revolution salon had been the lightness and grace with which it

[1] Quoted by John Morley, *Critical Miscellanies* (1871), p. 71.
[2] For Mme Roland's salon, see pp. 113-15.
[3] Taine, *Origines de la France Contemporaire—Ancien Régime* (ed. 1909), vol. I, p. 263.
[4] Quoted by Taine, *ibid*, vol. I, p. 196.

had treated fundamental subjects. Whether, like Mme de Condorcet, academically equipped; or, like Mme Suard, self-educated; or, like Mme Geoffrin, not educated at all, the salonnière ever carried off gracefully her learning or her lack of it. "I would give half my geometry," said the husband of Mme de Condorcet, "for the talent which Mme Suard possesses without knowing it: she is eloquent as soon as she is moved, as soon as her heart or her taste is wounded: and I notice that women whose self-love is tempered by adroitness are careful not to wound her."[1]

For some years, before the taking of the Bastille, this special charm of the French salon had been threatened by the tide of intense seriousness flowing in on society. Mme Geoffrin nobly did her best to stem it. When conversation in her salon in the Rue St. Honoré was on the point of declining into controversy, she would change the subject with her well-known phrase, *voilà qui est bien*. Those words would be the signal for Diderot, the worst sinner in this respect, to gather his friends round him and withdraw from Mme Geoffrin's salon, to a certain tree in the Tuileries Gardens opposite, where the conversation would be continued.

Mme Geoffrin died in 1777. Had she lived a few years longer, she would have found her little phrase as powerless as Canute's to resist the incoming ocean of seriousness. Salons became so deadly in earnest that their old habitués did not recognise them. "All France has turned into legislators," sighed Horace Walpole. And "All France" meant for him the France of the salons which he knew so well. "The country," moaned Grimm (and again the country meant the salons), "has been transformed from *une jolie terre de petits scandales* into *un vilain pays de gros évènements*." Ségur, on his return to France from the Empress Catherine's Court, went the round of the Paris salons which had been the joy of his

[1] Garat, *Mémoires Historiques*, p. 777.

youth, but he groaned as he found "that political passion had turned them into arenas where contrary opinions battled and hurtled incessantly, whence disputation had driven out discussion, and where the entire fair sex was political, dealt with nothing but politics, and turned everything into politics."

Our fair hostess of the Revolution, quivering with a political excitement, which threatened to upset the tea-cup she was handing to her guest, would feverishly demand of him, not the latest madrigal or the newest *bon mot*, but a ticket for the gallery of the Constituent Assembly or of the Jacobin Club.

While Grimm and Walpole deplored the new seriousness, to Mme de Staël it lent the salon an additional charm. "Never," she writes, "was society at once so brilliant and so serious as during the first three or four years of the Revolution, reckoning from 1788 to 1791."[1]

The change that had come over even women of fashion was heralded by the women's newspaper, *Le véritable Ami de la Reine ou Journal des Dames*. "When," ran an article in this paper,[2] "our ladies were the wives of elegant *talons rouges*, of gay magistrates . . . when they had to shine in circles where the talk was all of the rain, of the fine weather, of a stage player, or of a whisky (a kind of car), they never read anything but ditties and novels. *Le Journal des Dames*, full of love idylls, madrigals and pretty nothings, was as precious as it was indispensable. But since their husbands have become men, since in their children they have to breed men, the rouge-box and shoulder knots have been discarded, the tender Dorat, the genteel Bernard no longer lie upon their toilet-tables. *The Moniteur*, or some political essay, have taken their places; and in order to please them *Le Journal des Dames* must become serious."

[1] *Considérations sur les Principaux Évènements de la Révolution Française. Œuvres Complètes*, vol. XII, p. 382 (1820).

[2] Cited by De Goncourt, *La Société Française pendant la Révolution*, p. 246.

Over the tea-cups and round the dinner-tables and the breakfast-tables of the Revolution important political events were planned, and political parties were founded. In Mme Roland's salon, in l'Hôtel Britannique, Rue Guénégaud, the Girondist party was born. "On Mme Robert's sofa," says Professor Aulard, "the Republican Party came into being." Round Mme Dodun's breakfast-table at No. 5 Place Vendôme, Vergniaud and other deputies of the Legislative Assembly drew up the programme of the first Girondist Ministry. In Mme Duplay's parlour, in la Rue St. Honoré, her famous *pensionnaire*, Robespierre, and his friends discussed the King's deposition.

Thus completely were the *Bureaux d'Esprit* being metamorphosed into *Salons d'Etat*. Mme de Beauharnais' charming blue and silver salon, once famous as *une excellente auberge* because of its succulent Tuesday and Thursday dinners, came to be known as "the egg whence sprang the National Assembly." Mme de Genlis' drawing-room at Belle-chasse, once the abode of the Muses, came to be little more than the ante-chamber to the Palais Royal, i.e., to the Orleanist Party.

So much the fashion had the new seriousness become that the gayest and most frivolous effected it. In days when *la tragédie de Brutus* and *la Mort de César* were all the vogue at le Théatre-Français-Richelieu, when *Horatius Coclès* and *Miltiade à Marathon* were being played at the opera, little society butterflies, like the actress Louise Fusil,[1] would study Greek and Roman history, would read Plautus and Menander, and rave about the century of Pericles.

But there were times when, for a brief space, the new seriousness relaxed. Then Mme de Genlis' husband, the *ci-devant* Marquis de Sillery, forgetting his gout, would go down on his knees and polish the

[1] See *Souvenirs d'une Actrice, par* Mme Louise Fusil, Brussels 1841, pp. 114-15.

floor ready for the voluptuous Russian dancing of his daughter, Henriette, and of the mysterious Pamela (was she Egalité's daughter? no one ever knew). Then Mme de Genlis herself might be persuaded to attune her harp and sing to its accompaniment her favourite, and perhaps appropriate, hymn to inconstancy.

Even Théroigne de Méricourt, as we have seen, for a while turned salonnière. We find her soon after the October Insurrection entertaining to supper at her Hôtel de Grenoble, in la Rue Bouloy, serious politicians, deputies even, who apparently were totally ignorant of her past. For in those days, Théroigne's only lover was Liberty. She now posed as a prude and blushed at an equivocal story.

On the left bank of the river, in a little hotel in la Rue de Chantereine, which was to be Josephine's later, amidst flowers and perfumes and statues, to the sound of Mlle Candeille's divine touch on the piano, Julie Talma, wife of the great tragedian, received poets and artists, David and André Chénier, philosophers and men of science, Condorcet and Lavoisier. But such moments—all too rare and too fleeting—were liable to rude interruptions.

One of these occurred at Mme Talma's on the 16th of October, 1792. Julie was giving one of her most brilliant fêtes in honour of General Dumouriez, who was spending his four days' leave in Paris. The Talmas had invited artists, musicians, and members of the Convention—Brissot, Vergniaud, Santerre—to meet him. Mlle Candeille was playing the piano when suddenly there burst into the salon three uninvited guests, ferocious Jacobins. One of them was Marat, in carmagnole, with a dirty red scarf round his head, from which escaped locks of greasy hair, and round his neck a handkerchief[1] loosely knotted. He and his comrades came to accuse the General of having unjustly punished two volunteers

[1] Louise Fusil, *Souvenirs*, p. 240.

in his army. The guest of the evening had never seen Marat before. Having been informed of his identity, Dumouriez, with all the hauteur of the Frenchman of the world, scornfully looked him up and down, and then said: "Ah, so you are Marat! I have nothing to say to you." And with those frigid words the General turned his back on the intruder. Marat was furious. "This house is a hot-bed of counter-Revolutionaries," he howled as he went out, followed by one of the guests, bearing a red-hot shovel on which were sprinkled drops of perfume intended to purify the air infected by the Jacobins' pestilential presence.

The noise of the incident, this fête offered by "the daughter of Thalia to the son of Mars," was soon bruited abroad. The next morning newspaper boys were crying in the streets: "Great conspiracy discovered by Marat. Great assembly of Girondins and counter-Revolutionaries at Talma's in honour of the traitor[1] Dumouriez. Names of the conspirators who intended to assassinate the People's Friend."[2]

The hero of this incident never forgave his hostess for bringing him into such painful notoriety. In his Memoirs he accused all the Revolution women, with the exceptions of Mme Roland and Mme Necker, of being *intrigantes* or *forcenées* (madwomen).[3] Had he been just he would have made other exceptions, and one of them would have been Mme Talma's friend, Mme de Condorcet.

Daughter of le Marquis de Grouchy and sister of

[1] This term refers to the conduct of Dumouriez towards the volunteers, not, of course, to his desertion of the republic, which occurred later.

[2] Louise Fusil, op. cit., p. 247, and *La Vie et les Mémoires du Général Dumouriez*, bk. VI., chap. i., pp. 111-15; Hamel, *Histoire de Robespierre*, vol. II, p. 469; Antoine Guillois, *La Marquise de Condorcet—sa Famille, son Salon, ses Amis*, compiled from family documents, pp. 114-16. Guillois and Hamel both say the incident happened at Mme Talma's. The editors of *Dumouriez's Memoirs*, in a foot-note, place it at Mlle Candeille's.

[3] Dumouriez, op. cit., bk. VIII, chap xi., p. 376.

le Maréchal de Grouchy, who fought at Waterloo, Marie Louise Sophie, afterwards Mme de Condorcet, was born in 1764, at her father's château of Villette, on the borders of Normandy and l'Ile de France.

Those who labour under the delusion that the whole of the French nobility on the eve of the Revolution was merely frivolous, if not corrupt, should read the story of the serious upbringing of Sophie and her brothers and sister. The education of boys and girls alike included Latin, Greek, modern languages (specially English), as well as for the girls, music, drawing, and painting. In her serious studies Sophie soon became so proficient that, when necessary, she could take the place of the family tutor. Philosophy was her favourite study, and her favourite book, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. The Grouchy children were encouraged to take an interest in people who were not of their own class. On their expeditions into the woods, they would cut faggots and bring them home to the cottagers. Mme de Grouchy had invented a wonderful potato bread, which her daughters used to bake and distribute in the village.

When Sophie was twenty, she had to leave her adored home and set out on the one journey of her life. This was to Neuville-en-Bresse, near Lyons, where there was one of those institutions of old France, known as *chapitres*. They were societies of ladies, who were called canonesses,[1] and who belonged to the most aristocratic families. The head of the chapter, *la doyenne*, alone took religious vows. The others passed through an elaborate form of dedication, but lived comparatively secular lives. The Neuville canonesses, of whom there were forty-six (not all in residence at the same time) were bent on making the best of both worlds. Sophie, the year after her entry, was going to so many balls and reading so many philosophical works by Voltaire and Rousseau, besides translating Tasso and "the sublime Young," that she

[1] Mme de Genlis was made a canoness at the age of six.

lost both her health and her faith. The latter she never recovered. The former came back to her when she returned home, as she was soon obliged to do. Then, in the following year, 1768, her recovered charms conquered the heart of a hitherto confirmed bachelor of forty-three, who came to stay with her father. This was none other than the great Condorcet, the famous philosopher and mathematician, the friend of Voltaire, and a member of two Academies. Sophie did not return his passion. But few French girls in these days—and fewer still in those—expect to be in love with their husbands. It was not until four years later, when her only child, a daughter, was born, that Sophie was to fall in love with hers. At the time of her marriage, celebrated on the 26th of December, 1786, respect and admiration had to suffice.

Condorcet was not rich. Mlle de Grouchy had no dowry. There was no law in those days to prevent M. de Grouchy from bequeathing the whole of his property to his sons, and this he had done. Condorcet's biographer, Arago, can find no authority for the frequently repeated statement[1] that the Duc de La Rochefoucauld promised the young couple an income of five thousand francs a year. Condorcet was one of the least cupidinous of men : when his friend, Turgot, had appointed him Inspector of Coinage, he had refused to accept a salary. His income when he married was probably about eighteen thousand francs. But his tastes and his wife's too were simple. Neither desired to cut a figure in fashionable society. They refused invitations to court. But they willingly entertained a king when, like Christian VII. of Denmark, he happened to be a philosopher. Their salon at the Mint, l'Hôtel des Monnaies, on the Quai de Conti, soon became the resort of poets and philosophers—of André Chenier, the Abbé Morellet, the Constant Brothers, Charles and Benjamin, M. Suard (whom to know was to know everyone who used

[1] First made by Lamartine in his *Histoire des Girondins.*

a pen with distinction), and Mme Suard. Among distinguished foreigners visiting Paris few were those whose due feet failed to mount the staircase leading to Mme de Condorcet's drawing-room. England was represented at her assemblies by "my dear Lord Stanhope," as French Revolutionaries called him; by Adam Smith, whose *Theory of Moral Sentiments* Mme de Condorcet was later to translate; by Tom Paine, who, as representative of the department of Aisne, was to be Condorcet's colleague in the Convention; by Sir James Mackintosh, and by that eccentric David Williams, the founder of the Royal Literary Fund, the friend of Franklin, who probably brought him to l'Hôtel des Monnaies. Thither, too, came the Prussian, Anarcharsis Clootz; the Swiss, Grimm; and the Italian tragic poet, Alfieri, who was to marry the unhappy Countess of Albany.

Possibly the Condorcets were more appreciated by these foreigners than by their fellow-countrymen, with many of whom, even with those who belonged to the same political party, *les Girondins*—with Mme Roland, for example—they were not popular.[1] Perhaps the Condorcets were a little priggish, a little ponderous. At this time, on the eve of the Revolution, their ideas were in advance of the average opinion of the day. They were regarded as Utopians. Condorcet went so far as to maintain that women should have votes,[2] and, anticipating Metchnikoff and Bernard Shaw, that a time would come when human creatures would be able to prolong their existence through several generations. In religious opinions the Condorcets went further than most of the Revolutionaries. In politics they were among the

[1] Posterity has been far from unanimous in its judgment of Condorcet. Compare Lord Morley's whole-hearted admiration for him with Brunetière's criticism that a greater measure of fanaticism and of credulity—even of naïveté—have never been combined in one individual (*Manuel de l'Histoire de la Littérature Française*, p. 380).

[2] See last chapter, The Rise and Fall of the Woman's Party, pp. 236-75.

first Revolutionaries to avow republicanism. When, on the King's flight in 1791, they demanded a Republic, the Monarchists were furious. Condorcet, replying to the remonstrances of one of them, exclaimed: "It is my wife's fault. I allowed her to persuade me. . . . And would you disturb domestic peace for the sake of one king more or less?"[1]

Though the boldness of Mme de Condorcet's opinions lost her certain friendships and closed against her certain salons, the influence of her own salon, *le Foyer de la République*, as it was called, grew apace.

Her husband's advice on all sorts of political questions was constantly sought. He did not sit in the first Revolution Parliament, but he was constantly to be found in the precincts of the Assembly; and his wife, from her seat in the gallery, eagerly followed the debates. When, in the autumn of 1791, the second Revolution Parliament, the Legislative Assembly, was elected, Condorcet sat as representative for Paris, and for the third, the Convention, he was elected by no less than five departments. His outline of a constitution and his project for a State system of education exercised considerable influence on subsequent legislation.

Condorcet and his wife were always interested in education; and they were intimately associated with an interesting experiment, inaugurated in the year of their marriage. This was a fashionable lecture society, known as Le Lycée, and not unlike "la Société des Annales" of to-day. It was founded in a house at the corner of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue Valois by Monsieur (Louis XVI.'s eldest brother, the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII.); the Comte d'Artois (afterwards Charles X.); M. de Montmorin (Secretary for Foreign Affairs), and M. de Montesquieu. Lectures were given and classes conducted by the most distinguished scholars, notably, La Harpe, Marmontel, and Condorcet. The Society

[1] Aulard, *Histoire Politique*, p. 140.

was an enormous success, especially among women. The members soon numbered seven hundred, and included the most brilliant Society and Court ladies.

Here, at the Lycée, the beautiful Sophie, surrounded by the habitués of her salon, and saluted as la Vénus Lycéenne, carried all before her.

A popular versifier of the day compared the poverty of Greece, with her one Aspasia, to the wealth of France, with her numerous Lycéennes:

In France

. . . tout le beau sexe s'amuse
Du carré de l'hypothénuse
Et de Newton.

" Women of genius " are seen to

Etudier l'anatomie,
En vrai savant
Approfondir l'astronomie.

and to learn all such " trifles " without even knowing it, indeed, with such ease that they run the risk of becoming mere parrots.

The Lycée, closed during the most tempestuous years of the Revolution, was revived later and was imitated in another institution, l'Athénée.

In 1790 Condorcet's office of Inspector of Coinage was suppressed by royal decree; consequently the Inspector, with his wife, exchanged l'Hôtel des Monnaies for a flat, No. 50 Rue de Lille, at the corner of the Rue de Belle-Chasse, where Mme de Condorcet continued her salon.

In the spring of that year, her only child, a daughter, Alexandrine Louise Sophie, generally known as Elisa, had been born. Barely more than a year old, the baby in her mother's arms was in the crowd fired on by Lafayette's soldiers on that famous Sunday, the 17th of July, 1791, when the people assembled on the Champ de Mars to demand the King's deposition.

In the October of that year Condorcet was, as we have said, elected a member of the Legislative

Assembly. In the previous month he had been nominated to a post in the Treasury; and Horace Walpole had written ironically to Conway, "Good Monsieur Condorcet has got a place in the Treasury with a salary of one thousand pounds a year."[1] Later, it is "Condorcet and such monsters." Later still, Walpole can believe "any villainy of such a fiend."

As these epithets imply, the Condorcets were becoming more and more pronounced in their revolutionary opinions, in their republicanism especially. In the autumn of 1791 they refused to allow their names to be included among those suggested as tutors and governesses of the dauphin. Between the 20th of June and the 10th of August in that year Mme de Condorcet had received some four hundred delegates from Marseilles, who had come to Paris for the Feast of the Federation, in her house in the Rue de Lille, and, as we might expect, she had completely bewitched them.

A few months later the Condorcets, with Mme and Mlle de Grouchy, took a furnished flat at Auteuil, in the house of the Citizeness Pignon, No. 2 in la Grande Rue. There they intended to spend the summer months, returning to the Rue de Lille in the winter.

Auteuil is now a suburb of Paris, not more than half an hour's tram ride from the Gare St. Lazare. In those days it was a separate village.

For some years before the Revolution Auteuil had been a favourite resort of literary Paris; so, of course, it had salons. Three of them were famous: the salon of Mme Helvétius, the philosopher's widow; the salon of la Comtesse de Boufflers; and the salon of the general and military engineer, le Michaud d'Arçon.

The first alone can, strictly speaking, be called a

[1] *Letters* (Toynbee ed.), vol. XV, p. 67.

revolutionary salon; and this it was that had attracted the Condorcets to Auteuil. Mme Helvétius was an old friend of Condorcet's. He had known her in her husband's lifetime when, in la Rue St. Anne in Paris, she presided over assemblies so brilliant that they were named the "States-General of Human Intelligence" (*Les Etats Généraux de l'Esprit Humain*).

Some of the guests of Mme Helvétius, however, were shocked by the frankness which prevailed, and Fontenelle implored his fellow-guests not to speak evil of the Devil, who might well be God's business man: *Messieurs, ne disons pas de mal du diable; c'est peut-être l'homme d'affaires du bon Dieu.* Mme Helvétius herself, when the conversation grew too profound or too profane, would draw her special friends apart, leaving her husband to continue with the rest, what she called "his hunt for ideas."

Despite her comparative superficiality, however, when Helvétius died in 1772 his widow kept her husband's friends. And Condorcet was not the only one who followed her to Auteuil, whither, having married her two daughters successfully, she retired to a house and park, bought from the famous pastellist, Quentin la Tour.

Thither, soon after their marriage, Condorcet had brought his young bride.

Mme Helvétius loved men, adored children, doted on animals, and, like many another salonnière, disliked women, whom she considered proud and heartless. It says much, therefore, for the grace and charm of Sophie de Condorcet that, as soon as her husband brought her to Auteuil, this remarkable and difficult old lady made her a *habituée de la maison.* For Mme Helvétius would have agreed with a later salon dame, la Comtesse d'Agoult (Daniel Stern), who advised her young friend, Juliette Lamber (Mme Adam), about to open a salon, that she must have four times as many men friends as women. "If your

friend be a man, bring him," said another salonnière, Mme Mohl. Men, animals, and children returned the affection of Mme Helvétius. Turgot and Benjamin Franklin, who lived at Passy to be near her, sighed in vain for her hand in marriage. Children flocked to the terrace of her house to see her tame birds feed out of her hand. They appreciated much more than their elders her colony of cats and her fierce bull-dog brought from England by Franklin's nephew, as an offering to " Notre Dame d'Auteuil," which was the American's name for his lady. The dogs and cats that invaded the whole house were the despair of two non-practising and, later, non-juring abbés, Morellet and La Roche, who were Madame's permanent guests. After the bull-dog had bitten La Roche, Morellet wrote to Franklin, who had returned to America, that they were trying to persuade Madame to send Franklin's gift to a bull-fight; also that they proposed to present Franklin with a boat-load of the eighteen cats, which were on the point of becoming thirty.

The Condorcets, at No. 2 la Grande Rue, were but a few minutes walk from their friend, Mme Helvétius, at No. 24.[1] Her house, like theirs, fronted on to the street. The *Grande Rue* of Auteuil, like that of certain other villages near Paris, which have now become parts of the metropolis, then contained a series of noble dwellings. One may see some of them still with street fronts so unpretentious as never to suggest the charming prospect of sylvan glades, undulating lawns and sparkling fountains that may be viewed from the other side looking on to the park.

At No. 24 one found, on entering, a handsome vestibule on the ground floor, which, with that exception, was given up to kitchens and offices. An *escalier d'honneur*, with a balustrade of wrought iron, the admiration of all beholders, led to the first storey,

[1] The house was burnt down in 1871. The building which now stands on its site is No. 59.

where were the living-rooms, the dining-room and *la chambre de Madame.*

The salon, which communicated with the garden by a flight of steps, was large, as well it might be, considering that Madame's guests frequently numbered fifty. Its prevailing colours were blue and white. The furniture included an inlaid rose-wood chiffonier with marble top, a spacious couch in blue damask, *bergères* armchairs and *causeuses* upholstered in damask and plentifully provided with cushions. Over the mantelpiece was a gilt mirror, in front of it candelabra and a huge porcelain basket of blue porcelain flowers. That blue porcelain posy, for ever blossoming, for eight and twenty years, six of them the most tempestuous in French history, gazed down serenely on varying scenes, on guests coming and going, some bringing news of momentous events in Paris, others passing away to prison, to the guillotine or to escape it by dying with their own hand. Many were the heated discussions which raged in that blue and white drawing-room. After one of them its mistress found herself obliged to part from her old friend Morellet, who could not share her sympathy nor that of his fellow-guests with the new order that was dawning. For Mme Helvétius, Cabanis, La Roche and the Condorcets were the leaders of the revolutionary party at Auteuil. La Roche was the first revolutionary Mayor and Cabanis a member of the municipal council. At the magnificent ceremony which inaugurated the new town hall, the young girls of the district marched in procession, escorted by a detachment of the National Guard, to the new building and crowned with garlands the busts placed there of Voltaire, Rousseau and Helvétius. When they reached the last, the band played the air of a popular song—beginning with the line :

Where can one be better than in the bosom of one's family?
(Où peut on être mieux qu' au sein de sa famille?)

At this signal the philosopher's friends and

relatives advanced, laid garlands upon the image of Helvétius and embraced one another, while the crowd, deeply moved, looked on. The Condorcets were probably present on that occasion, which was in the summer of 1791. Some months earlier we find Mme Helvétius heading the list of the Auteuil subscribers to patriotic funds. Her contribution was four thousand five hundred francs, Cabanis followed with one thousand two hundred, and La Roche with nine hundred. In 1791, No. 24 in la Grande Rue was one of the chief revolutionary centres. The revolutionary leaders were accustomed to meet at Mirabeau's in the Chaussée d'Antin in the morning, at the Assembly in the afternoon, and at the house of Mme Helvétius in the evening. The death of his friend and patient Mirabeau, was a great grief to Cabanis. He sought consolation for his loss in friendship with Condorcet, whose sister-in-law, Charlotte de Grouchy, he was later to marry. As the political horizon darkened Condorcet began to disagree with the party in power. This was ominous, and he may have had a presentiment of his fate when, in the summer of 1793, he accepted from his future brother-in-law a certain poison, a powdered mixture of stramonium and opium, which he concealed in his ring. Later Cabanis is said to have given some of the same poison to Napoleon Bonaparte.

Since the King's attempted flight, in 1791, Condorcet—and with Condorcet we always include Mme Condorcet, for their political opinions were identical—had been in the vanguard of revolutionary opinion. Towards the end of the following year, however, as the King's trial approached, Condorcet had tended to drop behind. He who had been among the first openly to advocate the suspension of the kingly office, he who later had hailed the King's deposition and the proclamation of a republic, had not been able to bring himself to vote for his former sovereign's death. He had protested against the

death penalty in all cases. He demanded that Louis Capet should suffer the severest penalty short of death. From that moment he had been regarded as a moderate; and moderation in those days was dangerous. Power was then passing from " la Gironde " to " la Montagne." Condorcet had drafted a constitution which he had presented to the Assembly. It had been ignored. Another had been drawn up of which he disapproved. By a public letter he had appealed to the nation against it, and in favour of his own. Thus he virtually signed his death-warrant, as he found, for on the 8th of July, 1793, the Convention decreed his arrest.

For twenty-four hours Mme Helvétius concealed him. But if he had been found in her house it would have meant certain death for La Roche who lived there and who, as we have said, was Mayor of Auteuil. So, the following day, Condorcet went forth. This time, for a brief space, he actually found a hiding-place with the Minister of the Interior, his friend, Garat. By this deed, Garat, often a Vicar of Bray, attained to something like heroism. He would have kept Condorcet longer if he would have consented to stay. But meanwhile Cabanis was seeking a place of concealment where his friend's presence might be less dangerous to his host; and he had found one. It was in Paris, on the left bank, in a narrow, dark street, then known as the Grave Diggers' Street, la Rue des Fossoyeurs, now la Rue Servandoni. There, at No. 21, dwelt a widow, Mme Vernet, " one of those noble and beneficent characters that show us how high humanity can reach." Mme Vernet had been accustomed to let lodgings to medical students; and it was through two of these, Pinel and Boyer, both of them later to be famous doctors, that Cabanis had heard of her. " Is he an honest and virtuous man? " was all Mme Vernet inquired when asked to receive Condorcet. " In that case, do not stay to tell me his name. Let him come, and do not hesitate a moment.

While we talk he may be seized." Condorcet went, and lived for nine months at Mme Vernet's in strictest seclusion.

His possessions at the Rue de Lille and at Auteuil had been placed under the Government's seal, and his property confiscated.

Mme Condorcet was reduced to sore straits, for she had to provide not only for herself and her child, but for an invalid sister and an aged governess. Neither her resourcefulness nor her talents failed her. Every morning she tramped from Auteuil into Paris, contriving to pass through the City Gate unquestioned and unobserved among the daily crowd of market-women. Once inside, she swiftly made her way to a little shop in the Rue St. Honoré, taken in the name of the brother of one of her husband's secretaries. There she sold that delicate *lingerie* for which her race is famous. And, when customers were scarce, upstairs in a studio on the first floor she painted portraits. In those days when life was so uncertain and photography undreamed of, relatives were eager to possess pictures of loved ones of whom they might soon be bereft; and to fix their semblance on her canvas Sophie de Condorcet had often to work in the cell of the condemned. Occasionally towards night-fall she would venture to her husband's retreat. There she found him engaged in writing for posterity a justification of his political conduct. This work tending to concentrate his mind on his personal sorrows, plunged him into the depths of despair. Distressed by his low spirits, Sophie and Mme Vernet put their heads together and urged him to abandon this self-justification and to take up something less personal. Condorcet adopted their excellent advice and wrote his *Outline of the Progress of the Human Mind*. To that we owe his greatest work.[1]

The composition of this aspiring treatise, without

[1] *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain.*

the aid of a single book, would alone be an amazing achievement. But the character of the work itself, when one considers the position of the author, is still more astounding. Here was Condorcet with a bloody death staring him in the face and threatening those who were dearest to him, disappointed in his most cherished hopes for his country's future, yet writing throughout this book with all the confidence of the most untroubled optimism and leading up to this final paragraph which it is almost impossible to believe was written by the pen of an outlawed man: "Everything indicates that we are on the eve of one of the greatest revolutions in the human mind, and that it will be happy is augured by the present state of human intelligence."

This book, which has now become a classic, was published a year after Condorcet's death by and at the expense of the repentant Government. In the same year it was translated into English.

As the Terror advanced, concealment became more and more difficult, and nothing could convince Condorcet that it was right to expose Mme Vernet to the danger in which his presence in her house involved her. But she refused to let him go, and watched him narrowly to see that he did not escape. On the 4th of April he learned that on the morrow Government officials were to search his place of refuge. "If I am discovered under your roof," he said to Mme Vernet, "you will share my sad fate. I am an outlaw. I must not stay." With a Frenchwoman's logic and concision, and with a heroine's courage, Mme Vernet replied: "The Convention, sir, has the right to place you outside the law, it has not the right to place you outside humanity. You will stay."[1] But Condorcet was determined to go. And the next morning, a little before ten o'clock, he contrived to

[1] The accounts of Condorcet's last days vary considerably. The above narrative is mainly taken from l'Abbé Morellet's *Mémoires*, chap. xxiv., bk. II, and Arago's *Condorcet* in *Notices Biographiques*.

give his hostess the slip, and to steal away disguised as a workman in jersey and white woollen cap. He was observed, however, by the concierge. She raised the hue and cry. And soon after the fugitive had emerged from the Rue des Fossoyeurs into the broad thoroughfare opposite the Luxembourg Palace[1] he was joined by a cousin of Mme Vernet, one Sarret, to whom she was secretly married. This brave man insisted on remaining with Condorcet, and together they made their way out into the country. At three o'clock they reached a village, Fontenay-aux-Roses, which, like Auteuil, was the centre of a literary côterie. Thither had retired M. and Mme Suard. In pre-Revolution days they had been among Condorcet's intimate friends,[2] and being poorer than he, had received great kindness from him. But the Suards were among those who strongly disapproved of Condorcet's republicanism; they had avoided him on account of it, and they had not met since the King's death. The Suards too were in danger of their lives; and their one thought was to live quietly and unobserved. It was at their house that the hunted Condorcet, worn out with walking after months of inactivity, presented himself on that April afternoon. Arrived at what he believed to be their gate, Sarret bade him farewell and returned to Mme Vernet, whom he had left in a fever of anxiety.[3] But before Condorcet actually reached the Suards he had by

[1] Now Rue de Vaugirard.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 61 and 62.

[3] The whole of the Sarret incident is taken from Arago. Morellet does not mention Condorcet's companion. Morellet makes Condorcet wander for some days, *pour quelques jours*, in the neighbourhood of Clamart and Fontenay-aux-Roses and in the Verrières Wood before presenting himself at the Suards'. But Arago, who was a personal friend of Condorcet's daughter, Mme O'Connor, and received his information direct from her, she having received it from Mme Vernet herself, is more likely to be correct as to fact, though, as we shall see in his interpretation of facts, his judgment may have been warped by the sentiment of those who supplied them. At this point of Condorcet's arrival at the Suards' house we return to Morellet's narrative.

accident made a serious blunder, which may have determined his fate: he had knocked at the wrong door, that of one of his political enemies, and been recognised by the servant. When he arrived at the Suards, he found the master of the house at home. They had a long conversation together. Whether Condorcet told of his blunder is not related. Probably he mentioned it. At any rate he spoke at length of the danger which threatened him and his family. Then Suard told his visitor that he could not keep him in his house, but that he was willing to help the fugitive in any way short of harbouring him under his roof. He suggested that Condorcet should return at eight the next evening. Meanwhile Suard would go to Paris to try and obtain some false papers of identity which might take the place of the civic certificate which Condorcet was without, and the absence of which placed him in the greatest danger. Giving his visitor some food, a copy of Horace, and a screw of tobacco, for which he asked and which, with characteristic absent-mindedness, he left behind, Suard dismissed his illustrious guest.

Then immediately Suard set out for Paris. He went first to Garat.

Garat advised him to apply to Cabanis, who, as doctor in the municipal hospital at Auteuil, might be able to give him papers belonging to some deceased patient. Accordingly Suard went to Auteuil, where Cabanis gave him an old licence (*lettre de passe*) made out in the name of a soldier whom it permitted to go from one department into another. With this document Suard returned to Fontenay. At eight o'clock on the 6th of April, having sent away his wife and servant, he awaited his visitor in an empty house. He waited in vain. At half-past nine Mme Suard and her maid returned. Throughout the next day, the 7th, there was no sign of the fugitive. On the 8th the Suards spent the evening at the house of friends in a neighbouring village. There they heard that at

Clamart a man had been arrested who was thought to be Condorcet. It was true.

After leaving Suard on the 5th,[1] Condorcet had spent the night in the Verrières Wood. The next morning, worn out with fatigue, and having hurt his foot in a quarry, he entered a tavern at Clamart and ordered an omelette. "How many eggs do you want in it?" he was asked. Condorcet, always absent-minded and totally unskilled in the making of omelettes, replied haphazard "A dozen."[2] Such an answer was quite enough to arouse the suspicion of a revolution spy who happened to be present. Questioned as to his identity, Condorcet, with the white, well-kept hands of an aristocrat, replied that he was a carpenter. Such a discrepancy was more than sufficient to warrant a search; and the discovery of a Latin book in the pocket of the so-called carpenter was additional presumption of guilt. He was taken to the nearest prison at Bourg-la-Reine. There, the next morning, on the 7th, he was found dead in his cell. On leaving Suard two days earlier, he had said: "If I have a night before me, I do not fear them. But I will not be taken to Paris." By "them" he meant, doubtless, the officers of the Revolution. And it was probably in order to escape being taken by "them" to Paris that he had sought and found deliverance in the powder Cabanis had given him. The prison doctor attributed to apoplexy the death of Pierre Simon, the name Condorcet had given.

For months his wife and family were ignorant of his fate. Mme de Condorcet believed that her husband had emigrated. The State disposed of a great part of his property as belonging to an *émigré*.

Six weeks after his unknown death we are surprised to find the Municipal Council of Auteuil

[1] These dates—April 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th—are Arago's.
[2] This matter of the dozen eggs is only mentioned by Arago.

pronouncing Sophie's divorce from her husband. The divorce, so the Auteuil records show, had been demanded by her in the previous January. On reading this record, one cannot help thinking of the rumours of Mme de Condorcet's infidelity circulated by her enemies. They said she had already an entanglement before her marriage with Condorcet, that she had had lovers since; and we know that after her husband's death, though she never married again, she had more than one liaison, that in 1798, for example, she was openly the mistress of the naturalist Fauriel. The Abbé Morellet in his account of Condorcet's last conversation with Suard relates that the fugitive spoke of his little daughter with affection, but of his wife "with indifference." But Morellet had by that time ceased to be Condorcet's friend. He had separated from him, as we have seen, for political reasons; and when he disagreed with anyone Morellet could be unjust and bitter, as Voltaire's nickname for him—*mords les*—indicates. The Condorcets' friends, on the other hand, were unanimous in praising Sophie's devotion to her husband and his solicitude for her. We may therefore dismiss these unkind rumours. They were probably as unfounded as the absurd story that Sophie had been the mistress of Louis XV., whom she never saw and who died when she was ten. As for the divorce proceedings they may have been a mere formality (not unusual in the case of *émigrés*) entered into at Condorcet's own suggestion, and intended to save the lives of his wife and daughter, whose danger, as we know, caused him constant anxiety.

Sophie herself, though she survived her husband for eighteen years, never completely recovered from the horror of that terrible time. Her daughter, Mme O'Connor,[1] used to say that her mother could not

[1] In 1807 Elisa de Condorcet married Arthur O'Connor, one of the leaders of the United Irishmen.

bear to hear the word *Girondin* mentioned. Mme O'Connor could not bear to hear the name of Suard. For both she and Mme Vernet execrated him as Condorcet's murderer. For some months, in 1794, deprived of her husband's revenue, Mme de Condorcet continued in great poverty. Then, after the reaction of Thermidor, her circumstances improved. Less than a year after Robespierre's death Condorcet's memory was rehabilitated; and his widow received from the Government such of his property as had not been sold with the value of that which had been disposed of.

She then took a small flat in Paris in la Rue de Matignon, where she was joined by Mme Talma, who had divorced her husband. But most of her time Mme de Condorcet continued to pass at Auteuil. In that literary village salon life was once more beginning to flourish. Those who had achieved the miracle of living through the Revolution were returning. La Roche was back again in the salon of Mme Helvétius. Mme de Boufflers, released by le Neuf Thermidor from la Conciergerie Prison, was reopening her salon, ready to receive the exiled Talleyrand when he returned from America in 1897.

Lucien and Joseph Bonaparte were now frequently at Auteuil. Thither in the last days of the century they brought their triumphant brother, Napoleon, recently returned from Egypt. Napoleon visited Mme Helvétius, and, fresh from the vastness of the desert, remarked on the tininess of her park: "Ah! General," said the old lady, "you don't know how happy one can be on four acres of ground." The future Emperor could not tolerate repartee. So he vented his displeasure on Mme de Condorcet. "I dislike women who meddle in politics," he said. But she too was a match for him. And the widow of the first French advocate of Women's Suffrage retorted smartly, "You are right, General, but in a country where their heads are cut off, it is natural they should

wish to know the reason why."[1] With Napoleon was coming in a new era, which Mme Helvétius was not to live to see. She died at the age of eighty-one on the 13th of August, 1800.

For Sophie de Condorcet Auteuil had now lost its attractiveness. She took a house in Normandy, not far from the home of her childhood, where she spent the summer months, returning for the winter to Paris, to a flat in la Grande Rue Verte, now la Rue de Penthièvre. There she had a salon.

During her last years at Auteuil Sophie had been editing and publishing her husband's works, and with them her translation of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* to which she added a work of her own, *Lettres sur la Sympathie*.

The appearance of these letters, in 1798, brought their author an enthusiastic letter from Mme de Staël. Immensely superior to Sophie as a writer, Mme de Staël's literary *flair* had been quick to discern in Mme de Condorcet's writings the kind of talent she herself did not possess. "The letters display," wrote the author of *Corinne*, "an authority which emanates from reason, a true but controlled sensibility, which makes you a woman apart." Then showing a self-knowledge astonishing in one so impetuous, Mme de Staël added: "I believe I possess talent and wit (*esprit*), but I govern none of my faculties. They govern me; and I cannot control my use of them."

This effusion surprised Sophie. The two women, though not unacquainted, though about the same age,[2] though they commenced salonnières in the same year (1786), had never been friends. Indeed they had very little in common. Mme de Condorcet, as we have seen, was a free-thinker inclining to Atheism,

[1] This may be an instance of the transference of a story from one person to another, for a similar, though not identical, reply to Napoleon is reported of Mme de Staël.

[2] Mme de Condorcet was born, as we have said, in 1764; Mme de Staël in 1766.

and a Republican. Mme de Staël was a Deist with Christian sympathies[1] and always at heart a Monarchist, though she came to support the Republic when she found it inevitable. Moreover, Mme de Staël had never liked Condorcet. She had found it difficult to forgive Turgot's friend for his failure to appreciate Turgot's successor, Necker.

Mme de Staël, one of the most brilliant talkers that ever lived—" If I were Queen," said one who knew her, " I would command Mme de Staël to talk to me all day "—was not an ideal salonnière. She was too restless, too impulsive, too loquacious. The business of a salon lady is not so much to talk herself as to make her guests talk, to draw them out and set them at their ease. This Sophie de Condorcet achieved to perfection. Mme de Staël never succeeded in mastering her friend Mme Récamier's art of listening " with seduction." Neither did she possess that other quality, so indispensable in every good hostess—the quality of tact. Herein her Helvetian ancestry revealed itself. Her tactlessness was sometimes mistaken for malice, as when at a large dinner-party, addressing Garat, who years before had had a scandalous love affair, she asked loudly: " By the way, Garat, did you ever marry that girl? "

Nevertheless there is no denying the influence exercised by Mme de Staël's salon during the early years of the Revolution. We see her standing in front of the chimney-piece, her hands clasped behind her back, her large black eyes flashing fire, her dark hair falling in massive curls about her neck, as her lips pour forth eloquence. Her social dominance had begun early when she was a little girl at home; when seated in her mother's salon, on a little wooden stool at Mme Necker's feet, Germaine had held entranced by her childish prattle a group of great personalities, Marmontel, Gibbon, Grimm. She ought to have been well trained in the salonnière's art. For a while,

[1] See *post*, p. 207.

indeed, after her marriage to the Swedish Ambassador she imagined herself to be governing France from her salon in the Rue de Bac. For a while she succeeded in that most difficult of social experiments, especially in France, of making men of opposite political opinions dine together. But Mme de Staël soon found neutrality impossible. Gradually she became identified with a party, that of such constitutional Royalists as Talleyrand, Narbonne, Lally Tollendal; and because this party was not in the ascendant her salon ceased to count. Most of her friends emigrated. She herself stayed on until the autumn of 1792, trying to save the Queen, succeeding in saving Narbonne, constantly risking her own life for the sake of her friends, until, finding she could no longer be of service to them, she herself took flight during the September massacres, and, after narrowly escaping arrest, safely crossed the frontier and reached her father's house at Coppet.

CHAPTER III

CLUBS AND CLUB WOMEN DURING THE REVOLUTION

L'Insurrection ne sera possible que si les femmes s'en mêlent.
—Mirabeau.

TO-DAY if you ask an intelligent, public-spirited Frenchwoman of the middle class to what club she belongs she will look at you in amazement, and exclaim, "What should I do with a club when I have my home?" If she is well-to-do she may add, "When I have my salon."

Neither men nor women in the France of to-day are so addicted to the club habit as we are in London. But during the Revolution it was different. Then, among women as well as men, there raged a veritable club-mania—*clubinomanie*, the French called it. They had caught it in England. It had been a symptom of the eighteenth century Anglomania.

Before the Revolution, French clubs were for men only. A pamphleteer of the time deplores[1] the habit Frenchmen were contracting of avoiding women's society and isolating themselves in clubs. With the introduction of this pernicious practice, he says, set in the decadence of French manners and the substitution of something called energy, which was in reality nothing but rudeness and roughness, for the earlier social virtues and charm.

These clubs were mainly social. Members met to talk and play cards. One of the earliest of them,

[1] In a pamphlet of 1791, quoted by Prof. Aulard, *Société des Jacobins*, vol. II, p. 242.

founded in 1782, called itself "Le Club Politique," though it paradoxically tabooed political as well as religious subjects. Another, "Le Club de Boston, ou des Américains," was founded in 1785 by the Duke of Orléans after one of his visits to England. Others followed, and so rapidly that the Government began to fear a political danger. Whatever attempt might be made to exclude politics, in those days of political ferment, politics would keep breaking in. Consequently, in 1787, the Comptroller General Calonne closed all clubs. But he could not prevent people meeting together to discuss the questions of the hour. One of these little groups, consisting mainly of lawyers, used to meet, during the Election of the States-General in 1788 and 1789, at the House of Duport, a counsellor in the Paris Parlement. In this gathering some have discerned the origin of the most famous of the Revolution clubs, the Jacobins. After Calonne's dismissal from office, the Government stopped trying to check the clubmania.

Then, all over France, clubs began to spring up like mushrooms, and to vanish in many cases almost as quickly. "The club fury," writes a contemporary author, "spread through all classes, all ages, all sexes. In certain towns artisans left their work to go and *déraisonner* in clubs." There were clubs for everyone, not only for men and women, but separate clubs for old men, for old women, for young men, for young girls, and for children; clubs for every type of character, for every shade of temperament and political opinion: clubs for the Furious (*les Enragés*) for the Impartial, for the Poor, who wore woollen caps (*les Indigents* or *les Bonnets de Laine*), clubs for Loyalists, for the Enemies of Despotism, for the Defenders of the Republic, for the Conquerors of the Bastille, a club for the Federated, a club for Divorced Women, a club for *les Noirs*, a club for Servants, a club for Ladies, a club for the Electors of 1789, a club from Twelve till Fourteen o'clock.

Most of these clubs were political, but not all. The last for instance, the club from Twelve till Fourteen o'clock, which met at the house of one Cailhava in the Palais Royal, was a purely social club of jovial old men, the youngest of whom was sixty. The veterans occasionally invited young women to their assembly. Louise Fusil, the actress, tells[1] how she was once their guest, and how witty, amiable and gay she found her elderly hosts.

But it is with the political clubs that we are mainly concerned here; and among them we may distinguish three categories: first, clubs for men only; second, clubs for men and women; third, clubs for women only. In all three we shall find women for a while exercising a certain influence. They threw themselves into the club movement, says the patronising Michelet,[2] with all the "blind ardour of a woman's heart," with "the passions of the Middle Ages employed in the service of the new faith." It would be difficult to exaggerate the immense importance of these clubs. The power of the Jacobins for a while rivalled that of the National Assembly. This Club, whether or not it originated in the assemblies at Duport's, dates from the earliest days of the Revolution. When the States-General assembled at Versailles, some of the deputies began to meet together to discuss the deliberations of the Assembly. As many of them came from Brittany, their gatherings were called "le Club Breton." It was essentially a club of professional men, discussing political matters in private. After the 6th of October, "le Club Breton" followed the Assembly to Paris. The Assembly had established itself in the Riding School (Manège) in the Rue St. Honoré, on the site of the present Rue de Rivoli, where it is now joined by the Rue Castiglione. The Bretons rented for their Club Hall the refectory of the Blackfriars or Jacobin

[1] Louise Fusil, *Souvenirs*, p. 206.
[2] *Femmes de la Révolution*, p. 56.

Monastery, which henceforth gave its name to the Club. These monastic buildings were on the site of the present St. Honoré Market.

As time went on, and as the Jacobin Club expanded, it and its affiliated societies came to occupy not only the Blackfriars refectory, but the library also; then the crypt, and finally the church itself. Arrogating to themselves the high title of "Friends of the Constitution" ("Amis de la Constitution"), our quondam Bretons regarded themselves as aristocrats among clubbists. When they deigned to admit women, it was by ticket and, as a rule, only to certain parts of the hall. But sometimes from their special seats women addressed the Club and even proposed amendments and resolutions. More than once they were voted the honours of the session.

In 1792, on the 29th February, a member was severely reprimanded for having introduced three women into his private box.[1] Perhaps the severity of this reprimand may have been due to the fact that one of the women was Mme Roland, who was not popular in the Club. With her were Mme and Mlle Pache, wife and daughter of the future War Minister and Mayor of Paris. Counter-Revolutionists, who never hesitated to bring the vilest charges against their opponents, accused Pache of sending his daughter to the Club to be kissed by drunken Jacobins.

Mme Roland, unlike most of the revolutionary women, was not a *clubiste*: in fact neither she nor her husband can have been in the least clubbable. More than once both M. and Mme Roland were denounced in the Jacobin Club. One of the members, when he wanted to be ironical, announced that Mme Roland was about to found a woman's club at the Tuileries.[2] Ultimately Roland's name was erased from the roll of members.

[1] Aulard, *Société des Jacobins*, vol. I, p. 118.
[2] Aulard, *ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 576, and *Orateurs de l'Assemblée Legislative et de la Convention*, vol. II, p. 303.

But there were other prominent women who, for a time at any rate, were great favourites with the Jacobins; and large numbers appear to have been fortunate enough to obtain tickets of admission. Mme Jullien, to whose diary[1] we shall refer later, says[2] that when she went to the Club on the evening of the 5th of August, 1792, she found there some two or three hundred ladies, dressed as if for the theatre. The journalist, Mme Robert, often addressed the Club. Two days after Mme Jullien's visit, she told how three men had attacked her in the street and tried to make her pluck the national cockade out of her hat. Of the first the sight of a little knife and a firm refusal made short work; against the sword cane of the second she defended herself with a roll of engravings she was carrying; when the third was pulling off her hat a fourth came up and said, " You fools . . . don't you know this is not *the* day? "[3] The last remark referred doubtless to the counter-revolution that most Revolutionaries believed the Royalists to have planned for a certain day.

The voice of Théroigne de Méricourt was also frequently heard in the Club. The De Goncourts write of " the pitiless Herodias, who revealed herself eloquent and legal minded at the Jacobin Club."[4] We have already seen Théroigne in three revolutionary parts: as a rebel in the October Insurrection, as an assiduous attendant in the galleries of the National Assembly, and as the foundress of a salon. We left her in May, 1790, at her home at Marcourt, whither she may have gone to escape prosecution by the Châtelet Law Court, which, as it

[1] *Journal d'une Bourgeoise pendant la Révolution*, 1791-93, published by her grandson, Edouard Lockroy (Paris, Calmann Lévy, 1881).

[2] Page 207.

[3] One is reminded of *der Tag*.

[4] *Société pendant la Révolution Française*, p. 383.

will be remembered, issued a warrant for her arrest in the following August.[1]

Théroigne was absent from Paris for nearly two years. On her return she received an ovation from the Jacobin Club. And well she deserved it; for her experiences had been strange and her sufferings many in the revolutionary cause. While staying with her Flemish relatives, in the autumn of 1790, she had been secretly seized and carried off to the Austrian fortress of Kuffstein in the Tyrol, where she was imprisoned during the Emperor's good pleasure on the charge of having attempted to take the life of the Emperor's sister, Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, during the insurrection of the previous October.

One may readily believe that so inveterate an agitator would leave no stone unturned in the effort to obtain her release. Europe resounded with Théroigne's complaints. They resulted first in her being taken out of her dungeon and placed in a private house, then in her being granted something like freedom to go and come in the immediate neighbourhood, and finally in her complete liberation. By the end of 1791 she was back in Paris; and on the 26th of January, 1792, a member of the Jacobin Club declared that he had to announce a triumph for patriotism: "Mlle Théroigne, famous for her *civisme* and for the persecutions she has endured . . . is here, in the ladies' gallery." Immediately several Jacobins rose, went up to the gallery, and escorted the heroine down into the main body of the hall.

There for the first time she addressed the Club. Her oratory was wonderful. Only the pen of a De Goncourt can do justice to her eloquence: it was extraordinary, audacious, unbridled, overwhelming. It proceeded from a brain packed with the confused and jostling memories of miscellaneous reading, from lips on which the French language halted. Yet, notwithstanding, "Down the torrent of her *emphase*

[1] *Ante*, p. 45.

rolled the grandeur of Pindar, the majesty of the Bible." "In her voice were the imperiousness and the threatening of a people in wrath."[1] The great Club received her "with all the interest due to her sex and her misfortunes." She accepted an invitation to write the story of her sufferings and to read it at the Club's next meeting. The reading, when it occurred on the 1st of February, produced a veritable feminist manifestation, the only one to which the Jacobins ever gave expression. Unfortunately the actual document, which in an expanded form the writer promised to publish, does not exist; but references to it may be found in newspapers of the day, in *Le Patriote Français*, for example, which reports Théroigne as having said that the only way to establish the Revolution on a firm basis was "to make war on the rebels and despots who threaten us with war, but who fear it more than we." The heroine went on to give encouraging reports of the progress of the Revolution in the Low Countries, in Germany, and even in the Emperor's own household. The Chairman of the meeting, Mme Roland's friend, Lanthenas, ignoring Théroigne's cry for war, congratulated her on having triumphed through that passive resistance, which in civilised countries is woman's rôle, which has so often caused tyrants to grow pale, and which to unenlightened nations appears supernatural. He adjured the oratress to repeat her story whenever citizens assembled in great numbers. After Lanthenas, Manuel took the floor and waxed even more enthusiastic. He hailed Théroigne as one of the first Amazons of Liberty, as a martyr to the Constitution. He referred to a society of men[2] that had once presumed to question whether women had souls. But those men were priests, double-faced,

[1] De Goncourt, *La Société Française pendant la Révolution*, p. 177.

[2] The Council of the Church at Macon towards the close of the sixth century, referred to more than once by male Revolutionaries, see *post*, p. 253. But the question really was whether woman was a member of the human race.

calumniating women in order to appear not to love them. "If our fathers," said Manuel, "had so poor an opinion of women, it was because they were not free. Liberty would have taught them that Nature can create Portias as easily as Scævolas. In conclusion the orator demanded for Théroigne the honours of the Session. She received them, and not of that Session only, but of many that followed. For the next few months *la belle Liègeoise* was as free of the assemblies as were any of the men members. The Scotsman, Dr. John Moore, when he visited the Club, saw Théroigne not relegated to the gallery with her sisters, but sitting in the body of the hall with the men, and wearing a semi-military costume. Her favourite attire was, as we have seen, a riding habit, white or red, green or blue. But at one festival she appeared in Greek drapery, *une robe à la grecque*.

But, alas! Théroigne's popularity with the Jacobins endured but a few weeks; for she spoke too long and too often. The same may be said of another woman clubbist, Rose, or, as recent research has it, Claire[1] Lacombe.

Lacombe was born in the south of France, at Pamiers, in Ariège, about 1765. Very attractive, with dark hair, eyes, and eyebrows,[2] she went on to the stage and enjoyed considerable success in provincial theatres, until the violence of her revolutionary opinions involved her in a quarrel with the managers of the Lyons Theatre. Then she came to Paris, where she made her first public appearance on the 25th of July, 1792, at the Jacobin Club. There she read amidst much applause a petition which she was to present a few hours later to the Legislative Assembly. Of that petition we shall have more to say in another chapter. Apparently living on her

[1] See Léopold Lacour, op. cit., pp. 317, *et seq.*

[2] The industrious M. Lacour has found the following minute description of Lacombe in the registers of the Ste. Pelagie prison: *taille de 5 pieds, 2 pouces, cheveux, sourcils et yeux bruns, nez moyen, bouche grande, visage et menton ronds, front ordinaire.*

savings, as she said, Lacombe now devoted herself to promoting the Revolution. Her conduct on the 10th of August, during the attack on the Tuileries, won for her a civic crown, for which a fortnight later she publicly thanked the Assembly amidst loud applause.

The second in influence of the great Revolutionary Clubs, the Cordeliers, was also the scene of women's activities.

Founded on August 5th, 1790, the Cordeliers met on the left bank of the Seine, at first in the monastery of the Greyfriars or Cordeliers, which was in the street of that name, now called la Rue de l'Ecole de Médicine. The monastery from which the Club took its name was as vast as that of the Jacobins on the other side of the water. It had a large library, one of the finest in Paris, and it was in the library hall that the Club held its meetings. But only for the first eight months of its existence. In May, 1791, it was compelled to seek other quarters.[1] For months it wandered from hall to hall until it finally settled in a house known as l'Hôtel de Genlis at 24 Rue Dauphine.[2] Though in popular parlance the Club retained the name of the monastery which had been its first meeting-place, its correct title was *la Société des Amis des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*.. As this title implies, the Club was occupied rather with the rights of individuals than, like the Jacobins, with broad legislative measures and political machinery. At the head of all their documents, the Cordeliers had engraved an open eye, intended to designate the vigilance of the Society, ever on the watch for any official delinquency, especially for any miscarriage of justice.

[1] The Cordeliers Monastery had been the meeting-place of the Cordeliers District, one of the sixty Districts into which Paris had been divided for the purpose of electing representatives to the States-General. The Cordeliers Club was founded when the Districts were abolished. But when the new division of Paris into Sections was instituted, the Club was driven out of the Monastery.

[2] The house no longer exists, but the building occupying its site bears the same number—24.

The Cordeliers, having protested in vain against the imprisonment of Renée Audu,[1] subscribed for her to have a private room in the Châtelet Prison and sent her clothes by one of their most active adherents, Mlle Lemaure.

The successor of the Cordeliers in France to-day is *La Ligue des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*, which was founded during the Dreyfus Affair, and of which Professor Aulard, the great historian of the Revolution, is one of the most prominent and active members. The Cordeliers were completely democratic; their members belonged to all classes. Women played a prominent part in their proceedings. Whether women were ever actually admitted as members of the Club is doubtful. M. Aulard[2] thinks it possible. Another reliable authority, Professor Mathiez,[3] merely mentions women as being present at and sometimes taking part in the deliberations.

There remain to us two striking accounts of the appearance of women at the Cordeliers: the first, an address given by a woman; the second, a woman's description of a debate. But in neither case was it probably the Cordeliers Club. The first, the speech of Théroigne de Méricourt, was to the District of the Cordeliers before the Club was founded. The second was the visit of Mme de Genlis to what she calls the Cordeliers Club, but which was more likely to have been the Cordeliers Fraternal Society, that was closely connected with the Club.

It was in February, 1790, that Théroigne visited the Club and there achieved her most brilliant oratorical success. The account of it and a full summary of Théroigne's oration was given in his *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*,[4] by Camille Desmoulins, who heard it.

Camille had come to enroll himself on the register

[1] See *ante*, p. 50.
[2] *Histoire Politique de la Révolution*, p. 93.
[3] *Les Cordeliers*, p. 8.
[4] Quoted by Lacour, op. cit., p. 197.

of the Cordeliers District, and was about to leave the hall when the usher informed the President of the Assembly that a lady was asking permission to enter. She was thought to be some ordinary petitioner, and great was the surprise when it transpired that she was none other than the famous Mlle Théroigne. Enthusiasm seized the members, and one cried: "It is the Queen of Sheba come to see the Solomon of the Districts."

Théroigne, who was already on the platform, with never-failing readiness replied: "Yes, it is the renown of your wisdom that brings me among you. Prove that you are Solomon, that to you it is given to build the Temple and hasten to build one for the National Assembly."

Then *la belle Liégeoise* let loose the flood of her oratory. With flowers of classical allusion and biblical imagery, Théroigne drove her point home. The Assembly was unworthily housed; moving from the Jeu de Paume to the Hôtel des Menus Plaisirs at Versailles then to the Manège at Paris, it was like Noah's dove, sent out from the Ark of the Covenant, it had no sure and certain place whereon to lay its foot. Meanwhile, the site of the dungeons of la Bastille stood empty; one hundred thousand workmen were unemployed. "What more is needed, O Cordeliers, model of all districts, patriots, republicans, Romans! Lose no time, open a subscription list. . . . Invite your architects to send in tenders. Cut down the cedars of Mount Lebanon, the fir trees of Mount Ida. Ah! if ever stones were to move it would not be to build the walls of Thebes, but to construct the Temple of Liberty." Then calling on her women hearers to give their jewels to the cause, Théroigne set the example by taking off her own ornaments.

Amidst violent applause, the meeting resolved that the officers of the District should draw up an appeal to be addressed to the Districts and to the Depart-

ments. But like many another appeal, if ever made, it was fruitless. That glorious Temple of Liberty never had any existence outside Théroigne's feverish brain.

Mme de Genlis, when she visited the Cordeliers, said she heard women declaiming there with loud, deep voices, *voix de poitrine*, against the nobles and priests. They waxed most eloquent in attacks on the rich. A fish-wife (*une poissarde*) repeated over and over again that *préjugés mobiliaires* (she meant *nobiliaires*) could not be tolerated. But no one paid the slightest attention to this little slip of the tongue, and the speaker was warmly applauded. It seemed to Mme de Genlis that the great delight of all these people was to imitate (*contrefaire sérieusement*) the President and members of the National Assembly.[1]

The third in influence of the Revolution Clubs was "Le Cercle Social," or, to give it its full and formal title, "L'Assemblée Fédérative des Amis de la Vérité." It met twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays, in the huge partially subterranean circus which had been constructed by the Duc de Chartres in the middle of the Palais Royal Gardens in 1788. The Friends held their first meeting on the 1st of October, 1790. *Apportez y chacun un rayon de lumière.* "Bring each of you a ray of light," was the motto inscribed over the platform. If that requisition were complied with, the light must have been dazzling, for no less than five thousand are said to have been present.

The Club immediately became one of the great institutions of the capital, and the favourite resort of fashionable ladies. At the end of the first six weeks its members numbered three thousand. The subscription was eight *livres* a months. Condorcet was

[1] *Mémoires* (ed. 1825), vol. III, p. 213. Mme de Genlis quotes this passage from her own novel, *Les Parvenus ou les Aventures de Julien Delmours*. She definitely describes the place as *Les Cordeliers*. But clubs and societies were often confused.

a frequent speaker there. The grandiloquent title of the Club could not fail to provoke the irony of the journalists, one of whom wrote :[1] " Truth has set up her throne in the Circus. That place is put to many uses. On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays it is a concert room. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, nymphs of the neighbourhood turn it into a dancing saloon. On Mondays and Fridays people come there to tell the truth." Not oratory alone was provided. Those who were bored by Condorcet's eloquence—as many were—might play cards or billiards, drink coffee or read in the library. " Le Cercle Social " was the daughter of an earlier group, " Le Club Philosophique," a gathering of cultivated doctrinaires, with cosmopolitan and feminist sympathies.

While the Jacobins—within closed doors at first[2]—were occupied in preparing the deliberations of the National Assembly, and the Cordeliers with the rights of the individual, the Social Circle was a kind of political academy concerned with the theoretical side of the Revolution. Its most active member was the Abbé Fauchet,[3] described in one anti-revolutionary newspaper as " Bishop by the Wrath of God." Like many other Clubs, " Le Club Révolutionnaire des Arts "[4] and " Le Club des Dames "[5] for instance, " Le Cercle Social " had its own organ in the Press, a weekly paper, which Fauchet edited. It was entitled *Bouche de Fer* (Iron Mouth), because at the door of its office in La Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie stood an open iron box ready to receive in writing the expression of every grievance. The paper, entirely

[1] In *Les Révolutions de Paris.*

[2] Aulard, *Hist. Politique de la Révolution,* p. 93.

[3] Born 1744, guillotined 1793. An eminent ecclesiastic and court preacher during the old régime, he joined the Revolution and was one of the leaders in the attack on la Bastille. But, during the King's trial, he voted for an appeal to the people, fell under the suspicion of the Jacobins, and so perished.

[4] *Journal de la Société Populaire et Republicaine des Arts.*

[5] The newspaper of " Le Club des Dames " was entitled *Le Véritable Ami de la Reine ou Journal des Dames par une Société de Citoyennes.*

occupied with the ventilation and discussion of these complaints, contained no news.

Though women were not denied the privilege of paying a monthly subscription to the Social Circle, they were debarred from exercising any control over the Society. Its direction remained entirely in the hands of the little band of masculine philosophers who had founded it.

There would seem to be no doubt that some of the well-known Men's Revolution Clubs actually admitted women as members, for Théroigne and la Reine Audu were members of "Le Club des Minimes"; and Thérèse Cabarrus, afterwards Mme Tallien, writing to the *Journal de la Cour et de la Ville* to protest against certain allegations made against her, described herself as *Membresse du Club des Electeurs de* 1789.

But on the whole, in these clubs we have mentioned, women were kept at a certain distance. We now come to a different kind of club, "Les Sociétés Fraternelles," in which women played a really important part, as is shown by the fact that many of them were called "Sociétés des deux Sexes."

The societies stood in relation to the clubs in much the same position as in the religious world of present-day England the Mission Hall stands in relation to the Church. These fraternal societies were popular assemblies, often the resorts of whole families, of children as well as of parents. As the Revolution went on, each of the great clubs came to have one of these popular societies attached to it, and they multiplied rapidly, especially in the Provinces. Their importance in instructing the mass of the people in Revolution principles can hardly be exaggerated. The subscription, only a few sous a month, was small enough to admit the lowliest.

This movement, like that of the clubs, had its chief centre in the St. Honoré quarter, and the earliest of these popular societies (instituted in 1790) met in

the Jacobin monastery of the Rue St. Honoré. Its founder was a schoolmaster, one Claude Dansart. At a time when Robert Raikes and Hannah More were starting Christian Sunday Schools in England, it occurred to this Parisian schoolmaster that he might profitably employ his Sunday and holiday afternoons by gathering together the costermongers of the St. Honoré Market and other tradespeople of the neighbourhood in order to make clear to them the mysterious ways of the National Assembly. So he invited them to come to the crypt of the Blackfriars. They accepted his invitation in large numbers; women especially, lone females, who found it hard to keep their feet in the whirl in which they were living, and who came to M. Dansart for advice and consolation.

As the darkness of the crypt thickened in the winter months, the schoolmaster would draw from his pocket a tinder-box and a bit of candle, and by its faint glimmer supplement the light of his own cogent reasoning. As the Assembly grew, other candles became necessary. To provide for them the hat was sent round, and thus arose the habit of paying a small contribution. Soon the Society began to attract the attention of the leading Jacobin Club members who met above, and of other politicians of the day. And as the Society grew famous, the good Dansart found himself ousted. Some say he withdrew on account of a scandal about his daughter. At any rate, he was replaced by a committee of which the eminent journalist, François Robert, was a member. Now, side by side with the tradesmen of the District, sat such exalted personages as the Duc de Chartres, Danton, Tallien, Roederer, and Manuel. In this, its glorified state, the Society called itself by the loud-sounding title of " Société Fraternelle des Patriotes de l'un et de l'autre sexe, de tout âge et de tout état," later to be amplified still further by the addition of " Défenseurs de la Constitution." The Society

had now, as well as two men secretaries, two women, whose duty it was to keep a list of the names and addresses of the women members and to deal with the women applicants for membership. All applicants, men and women alike, must be proposed by one member and seconded or supported by two others. If the application were questioned a committee of six citizens and six citizenesses reported to the assembly of the Society, which admitted or rejected the member in question. From every new member the following oath was exacted:

"I swear to be faithful to the Nation, to the Law and to the King (later to the Republic), and to maintain to the best of my ability the liberty of France and the rights of man and of the citizen. I promise to remain faithful to the regulations of the Society as long as it exists."

Among the rules of the Society was one which attempted, vainly, it is probable, to insure the order of debate. "Seeing," it ran, "that a free interchange of thought and opinion is one of man's most imprescriptible rights, no member of the Society shall be at liberty to interrupt a speaker, nor to refuse him a hearing, but merely to refute him at the close of his speech."

By the time this elaborate organisation had been completed, i.e., by April, 1791, the Jacobin Society had emerged from the shadows of the crypt into the daylight of one of the upper rooms of the monastery, where it met at four o'clock on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday afternoons.

Meanwhile, similar societies had been springing up in the Provinces and all over Paris. Wellnigh every section had one. Women were admitted to membership in most of them, but not in all. In some of the meetings they were separated from men, though, in one case, only by a tricolour ribbon. In others the sisters had their own special galleries. From one of these, at Colmar, they were urgently entreated to come down and to help their brethren

engage in a mouse hunt. More courageous than Chaucer's Prioress, the Colmar ladies accepted the invitation and gloriously vanquished the four-footed intruders.

In some societies women were not asked for regular subscriptions, but only to pay for the printing of the rules. In some again, they were not permitted to vote. In others, when they did vote, their votes were not counted. Certain of these Fraternal Unions, following the Pauline tradition, prescribed silence on the sisters, exhorting them to make bandages, and to leave the brethren to do the talking.

Children, as we have said, were frequently admitted; now and again they were received into membership. Twelve was the age limit in one society. But there are many examples of the presence of much younger children.

In one case a young priest, *un curé assermenté*[1] brought his whole family to the Society's meeting. "My eight-months-old daughter, Cornelia," he said, "will be presented to you by her mother and placed on the platform by her nurse. Thus will she learn betimes to savour the sweetness and the joy of true Republicans." We read of a little girl of six reciting the Declaration of the Rights of Man with such charm that the whole audience rose and embraced, not her, but her mother. Was it the daughter's eloquence or the mother's attractiveness that aroused such enthusiasm? Another child of six, taken to the meeting by her governess, rose and spoke with so much vigour that the whole Assembly loudly applauded.[2]

Throughout the Provinces these societies multiplied rapidly. Lanthenas, a friend of Mme Roland, wrote to her that they seemed to personify the majesty of the sovereign people, and that their ardent patriotism moved him to tears. Mme Roland herself, though at first disdainful, and always object-

[1] A priest who had taken the oath to the Constitution.

[2] Villiers, *Histoire des Clubs de Femmes et des Légions d' Amazones*, p. 114.

ing to women openly taking part in politics, came round in the end and joined the Jacobin Fraternal Society.[1] Robespierre regarded the societies as the finest of forcing grounds for republican opinions.

Their activities were varied. In Paris they seem to have been mainly occupied with deputations, receiving them from and sending them to other societies and clubs, and sending them also to the bar of the National Assembly. Thus, in 1791, after the King's flight and humiliating return to Paris, fifty-five Presidents of Fraternal Societies petitioned the Assembly to consult the communes of France as to what should be done with the captured fugitive. The societies were always eager to denounce traitors and to bring them before the Revolution Tribunals. They were ever on the watch for conspiracies against the Government. One day the Jacobin fraternals in the crypt were honoured by a visit from Mirabeau and Barmave, who had been deputed by the Jacobin Club above to descend and thank the Society for its vigilance in detecting the theft of a quantity of bullion.

Many of those fêtes and ceremonies which were so numerous in the Revolution Period were organised by the societies. When, in the hall of the Jacobin Club, the busts of Rousseau, Franklin, and Voltaire were unveiled, eight women members of the Society, " simple as equality, beautiful as liberty," received from a procession of boys and girls one of the Bastille stones, deposited it amidst the busts and crowned them with civic wreaths. Then, with the high moral earnestness of that time, a prominent citizen addressed these " simple," " beautiful " ones : " Mothers and Wives," he cried, " you who have done as much for the Revolution as we, do yet more. An honourable task remains for you. Great revolutions are born in tempests which time alone can calm. . . . Teach your children to lisp with the words, ' Father,'

[1] Aulard, *Histoire Politique*, p. 96.

'Mother,' those of 'Fatherland' and 'Liberty.' At these words, let your child's eye flash, let his heart beat fast, as he grows up let the nation be indebted to you for a citizen, a defender of the nation's rights, one who, like his fathers, shall be the horror of tyrants."

Some of the societies had attached to them philanthropic committees composed mainly of women engaged in helping the poor, the sick, and the orphan, and, as soon as war began, in making lint bandages, and clothes for soldiers.

Cousons, filons, cousons bien,

ran the popular song :

Allons, ça va ça va.
V'là des habits de not' fabrique
Pour l'hiver, qui vient. . . .
Soldats de la République,
Vous n'manquerez de rien.

But these social gatherings were not always serious. Sometimes they wound up with a dance. Women would sing patriotic songs. They were more or less commandeered to act patriotic plays, being told that if they refused they would be regarded as traitors to their country. In some societies women presided : the Sisters Garros, for example, at a club near Auch—one was chairman, the other secretary, while their father was the mover of resolutions.

After a time feminine influence became too dominant in the societies. At Aire-sur-Lys, women came in such numbers that there was no room for the men, and when one female insisted on space being found for her footwarmer as well, such an outrageous demand was seized upon as a pretext for expelling her. It was a gross injustice, because in other societies footwarmers were expressly permitted.

As the influence of women grew in the societies, men lost interest in them. The men of the Jacobin Society preferred to listen to the debates of the Club

to taking part in their own assemblies. This annoyed the other sex; and women of the Revolution were not accustomed to suffer in silence. When aggrieved, their way was to organise a deputation. So now, on July the 12th, 1792, we find a deputation of Jacobin Sisters airing their grievances before the Jacobin Club; they complained that "men disdain to pursuè their instruction among us." But by that time women had begun to have clubs of their own.

The fact that they often met under the same roof led to a good deal of confusion, both in contemporary records and in subsequent histories, between these purely Feminine Clubs and the Popular Societies of the Two Sexes. Many of the Fraternal Societies, as we have already indicated, tended to become Women's Clubs. It is clear, however, that there were certain Clubs founded by women and for women alone. A considerable number, and by no means the least influential, were in the Provinces, notably at Lyons, Macon, and Dijon. At least two were in Paris, "Les Amies de la Vérité" and "Les Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires."

Of all the Women's Provincial Clubs that of Lyons was the most influential. It was founded in June, 1791. The members were called upon to take the following oath:

"I swear to be faithful to the Nation, to the Law and to the King. I swear on every occasion to urge my husband, my brothers and my children to do their duty to their country. I swear to teach my children and all others over whom I shall have authority to prefer death to slavery."

When, in 1792, as the result of profiteering, Lyons was on the verge of starvation, the Women's Club took matters into their own hands. Having failed to obtain satisfaction from the Town Council, they placarded a notice all over the city, fixing the price of no less than sixty necessities, including bread, wine, oil, fresh and dry vegetables, cheese, fruit, candles, etc. Then a well-organised body of

women police took possession of shops and markets, and for three days, the 16th, 17th, and 18th of September, until such time as the Municipal Council decided to fix prices, the Women's Club practically ruled the city.[1]

At Paris the earliest woman's club seems to have been "Les Amies de la Vérité." Founded in 1791 by a Dutchwoman living in Paris, Etta Palm d'Ælders, it was an off-shoot of the Social Circle "Les Amis de la Vérité," which, as we have seen,[2] met in the Palais Royal Circus, and where Mme d'Ælders was one of the most frequent and popular speakers.[3] She is said to have been the first woman of the Revolution to address a public meeting.

As in the cases of other Revolution heroines, a veil of mystery hangs over much of the life of Etta Palm d'Ælders.

Was her father an innkeeper, as her enemies maintained, or a manufacturer of wall-paper, as others have asserted?[4] Was her husband an obscure student, Loderoyk Palm, or the Baron d'Ælders? Mysterious and inconsistent throughout, Etta changed her name from time to time. About 1774, though married, she was calling herself by her mother's name, De Sitter. A few years later she reverted to "Palm" and added to it "Von Ælders."

She would appear to have been born at Groningen, in 1743, and to have married at nineteen. Her husband seems to have disappeared after a few months, leaving Etta to console herself for his absence, first with a Dutch Consul, Jan Muniks, at Amsterdam, then with a Comte de Maillebois at Paris, and during the Revolution with Basire, a member of the Jacobin Club. When the Revolution broke out, Etta was living in a charming little flat, an *entresol*

[1] See Maurice Wahl, *Les Premières Années de la Révolution à Lyon* (Armand Colin, 1894), pp. 604-6.
[2] *Ante*, pp. 91-92.
[3] *Post*, p. 241 *et seq.*
[4] Villiers, *Histoire des Clubs de Femmes*, p. 24, n. 1.

at 348 Rue Favart. In her salon was the portrait of an officer and an ottoman six feet long, upholstered in crimson and white damask. In her bedroom were four mirrors, one at the back of the bed. She is said to have been well educated, intelligent, conversant with public affairs and having powerful friends in diplomatic circles.

Of the part she played in the Social Circle we shall have more to say later.[1] It was in one of her public orations[2] that she first proposed the foundation of "Les Amies de la Vérité," or "Société des Dames Patriotiques et Bienfaisantes," and her idea, though she never realised it, was to establish these societies throughout France, and to place them under the supervision of the Social Circle.

The Patriotic and Philanthropic Ladies met every Saturday at the office of the newspaper, *La Bouche de Fer*.[3] The questions discussed were rather social than political—the granting of outdoor relief, women's education and their apprenticeship, homes for nurses and for young girls. Three young girls at least the Society thus provided for; two were apprenticed to dressmakers and one to a lace-maker. Systematic efforts were made to increase the number of members. Each Section of Paris was asked to send two representatives to the Society. Mme Legros, the deliverer of Latude, joined, so did la Duchesse de Bourbon.[4] But after a few months, for some reason or other—was it that the subscription of three francs a month was too high or that the mainly philanthropic objects of the Society were not sufficiently interesting?—the members dwindled, and in the autumn of 1792 the Society broke up.

The other woman's club at Paris, "Les Femmes" or "Les Citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires," was founded in May, 1793. During its short

[1] *Post*, p. 241 *et seq.*
[2] Villiers, *Histoire des Clubs de Femmes*, p. 29.
[3] See *ante*, p. 92.
[4] Égalité's sister. See *post*, p. 228.

existence of but a few months it was extremely active and influential.

On May the 10th, 1793, a band of women came to the secretary of the Paris Municipal Council and declared it to be their intention to found a club to which women only should be admitted. They explained that their object was to discuss how the designs of the enemies of the Republic could be thwarted. This Club was to be called "La Société Républicaine Révolutionnaire," and it was to meet in the Library of the Jacobins in the Rue St. Honoré.

The majority of these revolutionary women belonged to the extreme party, known as *Les Enragés*. They out-Jacobined the Jacobins; and in a few months we shall see their violence and disorderliness furnishing the Convention with an excuse for the suppression of all women's clubs.

The proximity of the Revolutionary Republican Women to the Jacobin Club and to the Jacobin Society of the Two Sexes soon became a nuisance. Three clubs under one roof was really too much. Moreover, the women were constantly leading deputations to the Club, and taking up the members' time with their interminable harangues. Consequently, after a few weeks, the Women's Club was removed from the Library of the Rue St. Honoré to a much less aristocratic quarter, to the Charnel-house of the Church of St. Eustache in the Market.

It is an interesting coincidence that the Revolution clubs, which in their influence on the people to a certain extent superseded the Church, should so often have met under an ecclesiastical roof. We may notice, also, that when the Apostles of Liberty appropriated ecclesiastical premises, they assigned the church to the aristocrats of the clubs—to the Jacobins, for example—the crypt to the tradespeople of the popular Fraternal Societies, and the charnel-house to the newest arrivals on the political scene, the women.

The Club's first President was Pauline Léon, a

chocolate-maker. She was succeeded by three women in turn, who are mere names to us, Rousand, Champion, and Lecointre. Then came Claire Lacombe, whom we have met already and of whom we shall have more to say. Even before her Presidency, she had been the moving spirit of this Club. The President, whoever she was, wore the red Phrygian cap of Liberty. Lacombe once said that the members numbered more than four thousand.[1] That was a gross exaggeration. They were probably about one hundred and seventy. Their main business seems to have been to lead deputations to other clubs and to the Convention. These deputations demanded among other measures: the establishment of a military force in every town, the raising of the Paris force to forty thousand men, the establishment of military workshops on every public square, the conversion of all the iron and steel in the country into weapons of war, the exclusion of *ci-devant* nobles from all offices, and laws to prevent profiteers from starving the people.[2]

From the beginning the meetings of the Republican Revolutionaries were no more orderly than were the meetings of the Men's Clubs, or, for that matter, those of the Convention. And it did not conduce to harmony in the Charnel-house at Saint Eustache when the ex-President Léon married Leclerc, who had had for his mistress the President *de facto* Lacombe.

The women of the Jacobin Fraternal Society, which now met in the Jacobin Library, where the Revolutionary Republican Women had once held their meetings, were anxious to make it perfectly clear that they had nothing whatever to do with this Women's Club. Indeed, the Society went so far as to request one of its members, la Citoyenne Baudroy, "lessee of the Chinese Baths," to insert a notice in the newspapers declaring that the Society was quite distinct from the Club now meeting in the Saint Eustache Charnel-

[1] See Villiers, *Histoire des Clubs de Femmes*, p. 229.
[2] Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins*, vol. V, p. 186.

house. This notice suggests that the Society in its anxiety to hold aloof from the Club may have been responsible for the latter's removal.

About this time Théroigne de Méricourt, not far away, in the Faubourg St. Antoine, was having trouble with another Fraternal Society, calling itself Defenseurs des Droits de l'Homme et Ennemis du Despotisme." Théroigne had started a club for working-class women on La Place Royale, now La Place des Vosges. To induce the women to join she showed them the signature of Mme Santerre, wife of a well-known revolutionary leader, and the owner of a large brewery in the district, who, said Théroigne, had promised to become a member. Then, to celebrate the inauguration of the Club, which was to meet three times a week, Théroigne, in the names of Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, and Santerre, invited the women to " a civic banquet." " Civic " was the great word in those days. With extreme French progressives it is still a favourite expression. But the men, " Defenders of the Rights of Man," apparently did not recognise those of women. At any rate they considered that Théroigne was tempting their wives to neglect their duties, and they sent a deputation to the Jacobin Club to complain of her conduct, which they said had thrown the whole *faubourg* into a tumult. They alleged, moreover, that Mme Santerre's signature that had been shown round was obviously a forgery, being in Théroigne's own handwriting.

Robespierre, never one of Théroigne's friends, was eager to deny that he had any connection with the matter; Collot d'Herbois followed his example. Santerre was much more chivalrous; he excused Théroigne, saying she had never pretended that his wife's name was written by her own hand. He argued that if there had been a riot in the St. Antoine quarter it was not Théroigne's fault, but originated with the women themselves, who had insisted on the girls from a certain convent of Pity attending the Club against

the wishes of the Mother Superior. But he added that at the bottom of all the trouble was the men's fear lest their wives would be attending club meetings when they ought to be looking after their homes. Santerre proposed a resolution closing the incident; but, though the resolution was carried, the incident was by no means closed.

Théroigne could not forgive Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois. At a session of the Club ten days later, at which Théroigne was present, d'Herbois publicly congratulated himself and Robespierre on having forfeited Mlle Théroigne's friendship. Thereupon that lady, infuriated by the insult, jumped over the barrier separating the women's seats from the main body of the hall, and, pushing back those who tried to restrain her, made her way to the platform and demanded the right of speech. No one would listen to her, however, and she was forcibly ejected from the Club.[1]

As the fever of the Revolution heightened, scenes of this kind were constantly recurring. In the Saint Eustache Charnel-house, Revolutionary Republican Women were getting out of hand. Their meetings were becoming more and more tumultuous. Rushing forth from their grim club-house like veritable furies, they are said to have paraded the streets and to have insisted on every woman they met donning the tricolour cockade, then the red cap, and finally, so the story goes, masculine trousers. Such tyranny could not be tolerated. Outside the Club, women[2] themselves opened a campaign against it, protesting to the Jacobin Club, to the Commune, and to the Assembly, against the infringement of their liberty to dress as they pleased. A deputation of women from the Popular Societies, on the 28th of October, 1793, petitioned the Convention to close the Club of the Republican and

[1] Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins*, vol. III, p. 521.

[2] The women of the Popular Society, known as "la Société Populaire de la Section du Bon Conseil."

Revolutionary Women. By that time, as we shall see,[1] the Convention was only too glad of the excuse; for the Feminism of the early Revolution had been succeeded by a virulent Anti-Feminism.

A Commission of the Comité de Sureté Generale was appointed to inquire into the whole question of women's clubs and societies; and as the result of the Committee's report, which was presented on the 30th of October, 1793, they were suppressed.

Thus in this, as in so many episodes of the Women's Movement, women had proved themselves their own worst enemies.

Men's Clubs and the Popular Fraternal Societies went on for some time longer; of the latter, women continued to be members. But more and more it came to be realised that these political groups were a danger to the central government. Accordingly, one of the last acts of the Convention was, on the 23rd of July, 1795, to revert to Calonne's policy and to suppress them all.

[1] See *post*, p. 267.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN WRITERS—MADAME ROLAND

"She whose glory casts in shade
France and her best and bravest."
—*W. S. Landor.*

FOR centuries no period of French history has been without its women writers: the Middle Age had its Marie de France and Christine de Pisan, the Renaissance its Marguerite de Navarre, the seventeenth century its Mme de Sévigné, the eighteenth its Mme de Lambert and its Mme d'Épinay; and so we come to the Revolution when authoresses were more numerous and wrote more than ever before.

The Revolution established the title of women to rank among the great writers of their period. In truth, the most brilliant of all the Revolution authors was a woman, Mme de Staël,[1] and next to her comes Mme Roland. A comparison between the two is inevitable. While in several branches of literature Mme de Staël was unequalled in her day, in one particular branch, the Memoir, Mme Roland was unsurpassed in her own time, and almost in any period of French literature.

In the actual making of the Revolution during its three most critical years, 1790, 1791, and 1792, Mme Roland was more intimately involved than Mme de Staël.[2] Though the two women lived in the same city

[1] Her writings will be dealt with at length in another volume.
[2] See Sainte-Beuve *Portraits de Femmes*, pp. 186-91.

and worked in the same cause, there is no reason to believe that they ever met. Mme de Staël in her books on the Revolution never even refers to Mme Roland.

Mme Roland only once mentions Mme de Staël, whose name she does not even know how to spell correctly. In a letter found among the papers of Brissot, the Girondist leader, after his death, Mme Roland writes from Lyons on the 22nd of November, 1789: "Stories are told here of Mme de Staal (*sic*), who is said to be very assiduous in her attendance at the Assembly, where she is reported to have admirers among the speakers, and to send them notes to encourage and support them when they move patriotic resolutions. It is added that the Spanish Ambassador, at her father's table, reproached her with doing this. You can't think the importance our aristocrats attach to such trifles, which very likely proceed from their own imagination. But they want to represent the Assembly as guided by a few wild enthusiasts and animated by some ten women."

In influence, character, and temperament, Mme de Staël and Mme Roland differed widely. Mme de Staël's influence was mainly literary, Mme Roland's mainly political. They regarded the Revolution from different angles: for each was essentially of her class—Mme de Staël a great lady, Mme Roland a *bourgeoise*. With Mme de Staël the heart came first, with Mme Roland the reason. Nevertheless, the emotional effervescent Mme de Staël succeeded in producing one of the sanest judgments of the Revolution, and this because she wrote it years after the events she was considering, when the fever of the great upheaval had cooled down. Rational Mme Roland, on the other hand, when she came to her Memoirs, thought with her heart, as she said, for they were penned in the white heat of the Revolution, in prison, while the knife of the guillotine hung suspended over her head, and over the heads of

all those she loved most dearly and to whom she had looked for her country's salvation. No wonder that even this reasonable woman, who had kept herself so well in hand through four years of party strife, now let herself go, and wrote bitter pages—*les mémoires envenimées de la citoyenne ministre,* Robespierre called them.[1]

One bond, however, there was between them: Mme de Staël and Mme Roland drew their literary inspiration from the same source. They were both ardent disciples of Jean Jacques. But the genius of Mme de Staël moulded part of the master's teaching to her own use; the rest she never fully realised. His love of nature, for example, was utterly foreign to the nature of the town-bred salonnière who, when gazing on the Bay of Naples, longed for the gutters of the Rue de Bac, and who said that she might have taken some interest in agriculture if only it had smelt less of manure. Mme Roland was also town-bred, but she followed her master implicitly, and she instinctively shared his passion for the country: *elle savait écouter la nature dans ses secrets solitudes,* says Sainte-Beuve. But in following Rousseau along other paths, especially in an excess of candour, we may hope she was doing violence to her own nature. That Mme de Staël could ever have followed her master in this direction is unthinkable.

Marie Jeanne Phlipon, later Mme Roland, was born in 1754, the only living child of an unsuccessful Paris engraver. For dowry her mother had little more than a heavenly soul and a charming countenance. Marie Jeanne's parents, therefore, could endow their child with no great store of worldly goods. Nature was kind to her, however, lavishing upon her rich gifts of body and spirit.

Though in the detailed portrait of herself at

[1] Hamel, *Vie de Robespierre,* vol. II., p. 722. *Roland dont la plume et la langue étaient si habiles et si promptes à manier la calonnie. Ibid,* p. 689.

fourteen, that Mme Roland paints in her Memoirs, she does ample justice to her virtues, she underrates her physical attractiveness. True, it resided rather in the charm of her expression than in the regularity of her features. Although, as she tells us, her mouth was large, her hazel eyes small but prominent, her nose too big at the tip, her forehead high and imposing, there were many who found her loveliness entrancing. One who knew her before 1789[1] wrote that "Her eyes, figure, and hair (of hazel colour) were of remarkable beauty, and her delicate complexion was of a freshness and brilliance which, united to her air of reserve and purity, made her appear singularly young."

At a very early age Manon began to develop that intellectual curiosity which was to render her the best educated woman of her time. *Il fallait toujours que j'apprisse quelque chose*, she writes. Her father, though otherwise no ideal parent, knew the value of a good education, and saw to it, despite his narrow means, that his daughter had excellent teachers. Her mother, a woman of culture, taste, and judgment, was admirably fitted to aid and direct Manon's studies. Manon was unable to remember a time when she could not read. At eight she was carrying Plutarch's *Lives* with her to church in lieu of a breviary. She had discovered the author whose influence was to dominate her life, as it did that of so many other leaders of the Revolution. Her admiration for Plutarch's heroes as well as other incidents and preferences described in her *Memoirs* show how early she developed tendencies which, growing more and more pronounced, were to determine her career and lead her to a martyr's heroic death. The injustice of social inequalities troubled her even in childhood. When paying an afternoon call with her grandmother on some lady of title she wonders whyever the

[1] Lemontey, see Michelet, *Les Femmes de la Révolution*, p. 120, n.

hostess should sit in an armchair and her visitor on a stool (*tabouret*).[1] Manon was indeed a born democrat. Her republican sympathies were strengthened by her reading of eighteenth century philosophers, and some years later by a visit to Versailles. Through the influence of a powerful friend, Mme and Mlle Phlipon were actually invited to stay in the palace. There they enjoyed the inexpressible privilege of occupying two insanitary odoriferous garrets, separated by only a slight partition from the apartments of no less a personage than the Archbishop of Paris. For most of the inhabitants of the palace the great event of every day was watching the royal family feed. But Manon was never happy except in the gardens. She was born a democrat, and this week's visit made her a rabid republican; so, when, after a little of this royal splendour, her mother asked whether she was pleased with her visit, she replied: "Yes, provided it soon comes to an end, but in a few days my loathing for these people will become uncontrollable."[2]

Her first great sorrow came to her at the age of nineteen when she lost her wise and excellent mother. This sad event closed what she has described as the happiest period of her life. By this time she found herself without any orthodox religion, although she had at one time been so ardent a Catholic that she had thought of becoming a nun. "The years that now followed," she writes, "made me acquainted with adversity." This was largely on account of her father's conduct. Deprived of his wife's counsel and influence, M. Phlipon speculated rashly and indulged in other excesses which threatened to dissipate Manon's meagre competency inherited from her

[1] Under the old régime, at the French court, only royalty occupied a *fauteuil*, a chair with arms; members of the higher nobility sat on *tabourets*, seats without backs or arms, and the rest remained standing.

[2] *Mémoires* (ed. Perroud), vol. II, p. 105.

mother. As a protection against her father's extravagance, she was obliged to have recourse to that typical French institution, the family council, on whose advice, after she had attained her majority, at the age of twenty-five, she went as boarder to the convent where she had taken her first Communion.

By this time, according to the ideas of that day, Marie Phlipon was drawing dangerously near old maidenhood. The position, however, was of her own choosing, for she had received numerous offers of marriage from suitors of all ranks and conditions in life, from a doctor to a diamond merchant, from an Academician to a grocer. But none of them pleased her, none realised the high ideal she had formed of a husband. One admirer, however, she favoured. This was a grave and learned gentleman, twenty years her senior, Roland de la Platrière, who was Government Inspector of Factories at Amiens. She had permitted him to ask her father's consent to their marriage. M. Phlipon had refused, and somewhat brutally. That was before her majority. At twenty-five Manon took the matter into her own hands, and when her elderly suitor next visited her at the convent grate she promised to marry him. She never pretended to be in love, but looked to find her happiness, so she wrote to a girl friend, "in the inexpressible charm of contributing to his."[1]

Then followed eight tranquil years of daily duties punctually performed. She became a mother, the mother of a daughter Eudora,[2] who long survived her. She travelled in England and Switzerland. She and her husband were living at Lyons when the Revolution broke out. They hailed it with delight. It seemed to them to promise the millennium.

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> And to be young was very heaven."

[1] Quoted by Faugère in his ed. of Mme Roland's *Mémoires*, vol. II, p. 243, n.

[2] Eudora married the son of one of her mother's journalist friends, Champagneux.

At the Feast of the Federation, on the 30th of May, 1790, representatives of half the nation assembled at Lyons. Mme Roland was up betimes mingling with the crowds of holiday makers on the quays, intoxicated by the sight of this new brotherhood of mankind, this wonderful birth of a new world.

That evening she wrote for the patriotic newspaper, *le Courrier de Lyon* (edited by her friends Lanthenas and Champagneux), an anonymous account of the day's proceedings. Sixty thousand copies were sold. It was not her first literary effort. From her earliest childhood, writing had been one of her favourite recreations. Her ready pen in later years was to render service and perhaps dis-service to the Revolution. Roland, at that time Government Factory Inspector at Lyons, had become a member of the Municipal Council, and in the following year he was appointed to go to Paris to represent the commercial difficulties of the city to the Legislative Assembly. Accompanied by his wife, he arrived in the capital on the 20th of February, 1791. The Rolands lodged in the Hôtel Britannique, Rue Guénégaud. And now Mme Roland plunged into the intellectual joys of the metropolis. "There is no place like it," she wrote. "Nowhere are the sciences, arts, great men, intellectual resources of every kind so admirably united." The moment of her return to Paris was one of the most critical in the whole Revolution. Much that it had set out to accomplish had been achieved; class privileges had been abolished, something like a constitutional monarchy had been established, the moderate party of La Fayette and the *bourgeoisie* were fairly contented, but among the lower orders a seething mass of discontent was beginning to make itself felt, and its spokesmen were new and young men, Robespierre, Brissot, Petion, Buzot, Vergniaud. They and others of like opinions soon formed the habit of meeting at the Rolands' hotel four times a week. One of Mme

Roland's friends, and probably one of her guests at that time, may have been the eccentric Englishwoman, Helen Maria Williams,[1] then living in Paris, who was later to share Mme Roland's fate of imprisonment, although she escaped the final sacrifice. Most of those who frequented Mme Roland's first salon were members of the Jacobin Club, and all, except Robespierre, became prominent in the Girondist party.

Mme Roland, as we have said,[2] joined the Fraternal Society, which was affiliated to the Jacobin Club. But she cannot have attended their meetings often; neither, except during the first days after her arrival, did she go much to the Constituent Assembly, where the interminable debates, leading to nothing, the insolence and ill-breeding of the left, the superciliousness of the right, irritated her. "I lived chiefly at home, as was my custom," she told her judges at her trial. "I was not in good health, and I saw few people." Those "few people," however, were the people who counted. And though, on those four evenings a week, when they assembled in her rooms, she would sit apart, apparently absorbed in needlework or letter-writing, not a word of their discussions escaped her, and ere long her subtle influence made itself felt. She was far from being one of those who considered the Revolution had gone far enough. She and her friends soon began to desire a Republic, even if it involved civil war. In fact she was not by any means averse to civil war.

Towards the autumn of 1791 the Rolands returned to Lyons, but only for a short time; the 15th of December found them back again in Paris, lodging this time in gloomy apartments in the Rue St. Jacques. Roland's post of Inspector having been abolished, he returned to claim the pension to which

[1] See her *Letters Written in France in the Summer of 1790*, and *Letters containing a Sketch of the Politics of France from the 31st of May, 1793, till the 28th of July, 1794*.

[2] *Ante*, p. 97.

he was entitled after thirty-eight years of service. During the months that followed he attended assiduously the meetings of the Legislative Assembly and became one of the most strenuous members of the Committee of the Jacobin Club. His stern, uncompromising virtue so won the respect of the legislators that when, in March, 1792, the King was advised to form a ministry of "patriots," Roland was invited to take the Portfolio of the Interior. Mme Roland tells how the suggestion came to her as a complete surprise. Brissot dropped in one evening when she was alone and spoke of it. She took it as a joke. But Brissot insisted, and she promised to sound her husband on the subject. Three days later he accepted the office.

Then we see the Quakerish Roland, in Puritan costume, round hat, and strings in his shoes, kissing hands at the Tuileries. "Ah, sir, no shoe-buckles!" the horror-struck Master of the Ceremonies whispered to General Dumouriez. "Ah, sir, all is lost," replied the General who tells the story.

Roland now took his wife away from their dull lodgings in the Rue St. Jacques to the sumptuous gilded saloons and the Venetian mirrors of the Ministry of the Interior.

Here, once a week, during her husband's first term of office, twice during his second, Mme Roland gave a dinner party to men only. The extravagance of these entertainments was one of the many charges brought against her during her trial.

In her Memoirs she insists on the simplicity, even the austerity, of these repasts, served with taste and care, it is true, but without profusion and consisting of one course only. The guests numbered usually fifteen, sometimes eighteen, and once twenty. These gatherings, like the Revolution itself, had an international character: Anarcharsis Clootz, Tom Paine, and David Williams sat at the ministerial board. On other days of the week the Rolands spent the evening

tête-à-tête, busily occupied with public affairs, postponing the hour of their simple meal until it became so late that their daughter could not join them, having supped upstairs in her own room with her governess.

From a psychological point of view Mme Roland's description of her life at this time is one of the most interesting chapters of her autobiography. For here we find her with unconscious inconsistency attempting in one sentence to prove that she had nothing whatever to do with public affairs, and in the next showing how deep and how potent was the influence she exercised over them.

In one of these notable passages Mme Roland wrote: "I love study as much as I hate cards and am bored by the society of fools. Accustomed to stay at home, I shared Roland's work and cultivated my personal tastes. I continued this simple life at the Ministry. I never kept a salon. I gave a dinner twice a week to ministers and deputies whom my husband needed to see and to talk to about his work. They discussed state affairs in my presence, because they knew I would not interfere and that my associates might be trusted. Out of all the rooms of the vast apartment, I had chosen for my own daily habitation the smallest of all, a little *cabinet* in which I had my books and my bureau, It often happened that friends and colleagues who wanted a confidential talk with the Minister, instead of going straight to him in his room where he would be surrounded by his clerks and others, would come to me and ask me to call him into my *cabinet*. Thus, without either intrigue or vain curiosity, I found myself in the heart of things. Roland delighted afterwards to discuss these matters with me in private, and with that confidence which ever reigned between us and caused us to hold all our knowledge and all our views in common. Thus it came about that friends who had any information to communicate or opinion to

express, certain of always finding me, would come and ask me to pass it on to the Minister at the first opportunity."

No wonder that Louvet, the author of *Faublas,* once said to Roland: "Thy wife is a greater man than thyself."

She was indeed the soul of that Girondist party which had been cradled in her boudoir in the Hôtel Britannique. "Why do they not take a man for their leader?" cried Danton, the most deadly among Mme Roland's many enemies.

In the spring of 1792 the Girondists, who were now at the height of their power, were very sanguine. Mme Roland says she did not share the illusions of her husband and his colleagues. They were delighted with the frame of mind in which they found the King. They flattered themselves that the Revolution was over and a better order of things assured. "Every time I see you set out for the Council in that mood," said Mme Roland to her husband, "I feel convinced that you are about to commit some folly." And even for these buoyant ministers disillusionment did not tarry. It soon became obvious that the King was incapable of real seriousness. The most important and urgent decisions were postponed, while priceless time was frittered away in meaningless discussions. When the question was war, the King would discourse at length on travel; when negotiations, he would discuss the customs of various lands. "The royal council is little better than a café," exclaimed Mme Roland. "It would be better for you," she told her husband, "to spend three hours in solitary meditation on weighty affairs than to waste your time in such futilities."

Roland soon began to share his wife's opinion. And when the King at length made up his mind to refuse his sanction to two decrees, one condemning to banishment all priests who refused to take the oath

to the Constitution, and the other establishing a camp of twenty thousand men near Paris, the Minister of Interior felt himself useless. A letter was composed, chiefly, it is thought, by Mme Roland, and sent to the King. This epistle, though the writer was proud of it, appears to-day a sorry document—long-winded, tactless, and worse—impertinent and foolish. Of course it produced the desired effect: Roland and his Girondist colleagues were dismissed.

On the 12th of June, 1792, Mme Roland exchanged her gorgeous apartments in the Ministry of the Interior for her flat on an upper floor of the old house in the Rue St. Jacques. But here she was hardly less influential than at the Ministry. Here she continued to gather around her a steadily increasing circle of friends, most of them young men whose adoration of her was a part of their politics. Then, on the momentous 10th of August, Roland, with his Girondist colleagues, was recalled to the Ministry.

The five months of Roland's second ministry were fraught with disaster for his country, his King, his party, and his own reputation. Mme Roland admitted that throughout she was her husband's counsellor. She advised him badly. But who would have done better? For there was never a more perplexing situation. The opposition between La Gironde and La Montagne (or the Jacobins[1]) was coming to a head. Yet both parties were represented in the Ministry. Roland had therefore to contend against enemies within the Cabinet. These enemies actually presumed to bring an accusation against Mme Roland. She was charged with having treacherous dealings with England. Mme Roland appeared before the bar of the Convention. "Came," writes Carlyle, "'in her high clearness,' her beautiful voice trembled amidst the favourable and the attentive silence of the

[1] How precisely these two parties differed it is difficult to say. But there is no doubt that strong personal animosities separated them.

Assembly, this voice of a lovely woman heard for the first time at the Convention's bar. It convicted her accuser of impudence. It dissipated him 'into despicability and air.'"[1] The friends of order applauded. Robespierre himself despised the ridiculous conspiracy against her. He smiled for the last time at his former friend's beauty and innocence.

While Mme Roland triumphed, her husband, alas! had been steadily losing ground in public opinion and in that of his colleagues.

Barely a fortnight after his accession to office, on the 23rd of August, when the rapidly advancing Prussians took Longwy, Roland had urged the Government's retirement to Blois, and had given Danton the opportunity of successfully opposing that unpopular suggestion. A week later began the massacres of prisoners. The Minister of the Interior either could not or would not stay their hideous progress. Fabre d'Eglantine said in the Jacobin Club, on the first day of the massacre, September the 2nd, that he had seen Roland in the garden of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, beating his head against a tree, while he cried out that the Government must fly to Tours, or to Blois.[2] Later he publicly announced that in the beginning he had not completely disapproved, that he merely blamed the continuance of the massacres.

When the Convention met on the 21st of September, the opposition between La Montagne and La Gironde had intensified. During a debate on the condition of the country an accusation was made against Robespierre, of which Roland had fifteen

[1] See also Aulard, *Société des Jacobins,* vol. IV, p. 552, 7th December, 1792, Dubois de Crancé at the Jacobins, says: *Sur la dénonciation de Chabot, Roland et sa femme ont été mandés á la barre; ils se sont pleinement justifiés, et Mme Roland a parlé avec beaucoup de grace et d'esprit.*

[2] Aulard, *Société des Jacobins,* vol. IV, p. 462. One must not, however, attach too much importance to the words of Fabre d'Eglantine, who besides being one of the secretaries of Danton, Roland's arch enemy, was extremely unscrupulous.

thousand copies printed, at the Government's expense, for circulation in the provinces. Then in November came the affair of the iron safe. A locksmith revealed to Roland its existence behind a secret panel in the Tuileries. And the Minister, instead of at once putting all the documents it contained under seal until they could be examined on the spot by a commission of the Assembly, had them placed in a portfolio and brought to the Ministry. This unwise action laid him open to the charge of having destroyed certain papers which might have incriminated his party.

About this time Roland and the Girondists were further weakened by the discussions which began as to the King's fate. The Minister of the Interior and the Girondists strongly advocated the taking of a plebiscite. Roland, probably under his wife's dictation, appealed to the nation in its favour in a pamphlet entitled: "Can it be contested that the sovereign people has the right to pardon Louis Capet? And how can it exercise that right if it be not consulted?"

The King's condemnation on the 18th of January, 1793, and his execution three days later, determined the fall of La Gironde. On the following day Roland sent in his resignation. Four months later, on the 31st of May, a warrant was issued for his arrest. While, having been warned by a friend, he fled to a place of safety, his wife, remembering her recent triumph at the bar of the Convention, demanded to be heard in his defence. Instead, on that very night, by order of the Commune, she herself was arrested on no specific[1] charge and lodged in the Abbaye Prison.

"As the doors of her prison closed on this brave woman," writes Lamartine, "all the virtues, the faults, the hopes, the repentance and the heroism of her party seemed to enter the dungeon with her."

On the 24th June she was released from the

[1] Ultimately she was charged with the same offence as Marie Antoinette, Mme Elizabeth, Camille Desmoulins, Bailly, Chaumette, Barnave and Hébert: *conspiration royaliste, complicité avec Pitt et Coburg.*

Abbaye. But barely had she entered her house when she was re-arrested and sent to Sainte Pélagie, the prison for prostitutes.

For five months she was kept in prison without any definite accusation being brought against her. Then her fate became strangely linked with that of another great heroine of the Revolution, Charlotte Corday. On her arrival in Paris, Marat's assassin had, as we shall see,[1] gone with a letter of introduction to the Girondist deputy, Duperret. Duperret's association with the slayer of the " People's Friend " had led to his arrest. And during his trial there had been found among his papers, letters from Mme Roland sympathising with the Girondist deputies, who, after the movement in Paris against them, had taken refuge at Caen. This was enough to involve Mme Roland in the accusations then being brought against her former friends, Brissot, Vergniaud, and others. She was summoned to appear as a witness at their trial.

The long silence to which she had been condemned in prison had irked her even more than her confinement. She remembered her triumph at the bar of the Convention in the previous winter; and now she welcomed with delight the opportunity of using her eloquence on her friends' behalf. " I had resolved to thunder without reserve," she wrote to her friend, Bosc, " and then to make an end." So she had written to Bosc asking him to send her poison. This she had intended to take as soon as her speech was over. But she was denied both the poison and the opportunity of " thundering." Bosc refused her the means of self-destruction, the Court the occasion for a display of her eloquence. Though summoned to the trial, she was not called as a witness. All she could do was to write a protest against the trial—*Observations Rapides sur l'Acte d'Accusation contre les Députés, par Amar.* This and her Memoirs, three

[1] *Post*, pp. 191-93.

hundred pages written in twenty-two days, and correspondence with her friends occupied the wearisome days of her captivity. She was also re-reading Tacitus, who was now her favourite author. She had to write almost under the eyes of her jailers, with the warder always at her heels when she received her rare visitors. Nevertheless, throughout her correspondence, and to all who were permitted to visit her, she appeared amazingly self-possessed and even cheerful, ever deeply solicitous for her friends. "For myself I have nothing to lose," she wrote.[1] "But I am so apprehensive for all who approach me that yesterday, at the Palais (Palace of Justice) I hesitated to return the salute of a man I knew, and for whom I feared the imprudence of recognising me in public."

When at last, on the 1st of November, she was brought to trial, her heroism persisted to the end. Throughout the two days of interrogation, followed by the passing of the death sentence, throughout all the terrible preparations for death on the scaffold she remained perfectly calm. "Do not come into Court to-morrow," she said to her counsel, Chauveau-Lagarde, on the eve of her execution, "you would ruin yourself without saving me." With complete self-possession, as she passed by her fellow-prisoners to her cell, she smilingly drew her hand over the back of her neck, making the agreed sign that the death sentence had been passed. On the tumbril, as she journeyed for the last time through the streets of her beloved Paris, from the Conciergerie Prison to the Place de la Révolution,[2] amidst the howls of the mob, she maintained perfect serenity. Her one concern seemed to be to cheer her companion, an assignat printer, who was seized with panic. Finally, arrived at the guillotine, fearing lest the horror of seeing her suffer would be too much for him, she asked the executioner to permit him to be the first to

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. II, p. 270.
[2] Now the Place de la Concorde.

die. " Do not refuse a woman's last entreaty," she implored when he hesitated. And her prayer was granted. Thus, in the deepening twilight of a November afternoon, the 9th of the month, this beautiful courageous woman died.

Whether, turning towards the colossal statue of Liberty on the square, she uttered the words tradition has attributed to her, whether she sighed: " O Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name! " or, according to another version, " O Liberty, how they have tricked thee! " matters not. For whether or no she expressed them, these sentiments had been hers through all the bitter days of disappointment and disillusion.

" A male mind," " a stoical heart," some have called her. And so at times she appeared, in those admirable Memoirs which seem often to have been written rather by the sword of a Cato than by the pen of a woman. But there was another side to her nature. In prison, putting away her pen, alone save for the presence of one female attendant, she would lean on the window-sill and weep for three hours at a time. Despite that grandly courageous demeanour, there were tears in her eyes as she turned away from the judgment hall, where her doom had been pronounced. And all the greater was her courage because of the tenderness and fears of which her heart was capable.

Femme très femme, Sainte-Beuve calls her. " Separate Mme Roland from the Revolution and she appears quite different," wrote the Comte de Beugnot of Mme Roland in prison.[1] " No one could better define the duties of a wife and mother. . . . When she spoke of her daughter and her husband her eyes filled with tears. The party woman had disappeared."

Lamartine's opinion of her is that " happy and beloved she would have been but a woman. Unhappy

[1] Cited by Faugère, op. cit., vol. VI, p. 286.

and lonely she became the leader of a party." But "Beloved?" Surely few women have been more "beloved." Her husband in his austere way adored her. When the news of her execution reached him in his place of refuge, he went out, and, by the wayside, took a dart which he had concealed in his cane, and resting the hilt upon the trunk of an apple tree, lent upon it so that it pierced his heart. For the leaders of the Girondist party, their adoration of Mme Roland was a religion. The poor fallen women, who were her fellow-prisoners at la Pélagie, worshipped her. Immediately she appeared in the court-yard all brawls and disputes were silenced, the squalid crowd pressed around her as if she were a tutelary goddess. But Lamartine used that word "beloved" in a special sense, to indicate the craving of a passionate woman's heart for something more than the stern affection of a pedantic husband, more than the filial devotion of a daughter, or the esteem of political partisans, or the ardent admiration of many intimate friends, or the loving gratitude of those whom she comforted in prison.

Lamartine, when he employed that word "beloved," may have had in mind allusions in Mme Roland's Memoirs, which long aroused the curiosity of her readers. Here is one of them :[1] "I honour, I cherish my husband as an affectionate daughter adores a virtuous father, to whom she will sacrifice even her lover, but I have found the man who might be that lover, and, while I remained true to my duty, I was not clever enough to hide the sentiment which I never allowed to prevail over my sense of duty. My husband, extremely sensitive, wounded in his affection and his self-respect, could not endure the idea of the slightest derogation from his sway; his mind grew sombre; his jealousy irritated me; happiness fled from us; he adored me; I sacrificed myself to him and we were unhappy."

[1] *Mémoires*, éd. Perroud, vol. II, p. 251.

Earlier she had written of " a tempest of passion from which an athlete's vigour barely succeeded in delivering her mature years." Who was the man who might have been her lover? Who had aroused that tempest of forbidden passion? This beautiful woman had always around her a band of devoted admirers: *êtres dévoués et doux*, Sainte-Beuve calls them, *tels que les femmes honnêtes pourraient en garder prés d'elles sans inconvénients pendant une éternité*. Was the man who might be loved one of these? Was it Bosc, always devoted? Was it Lanthenas, the friend of the family? Was it Barbaroux, the Antinous of Marseilles? Michelet thought it was Bancal des Issarts. Sainte-Beuve believed that a sacred veil would for ever hide the object of the passion which, more and more tumultuously as death approached, surged through that noble soul. But Michelet and Sainte-Beuve were alike mistaken, and Sainte-Beuve was to live to see the rending of that sacred veil.

Twenty-nine years after he had written those words, a Paris bookseller, the father of Anatole France, announced for sale by auction, among other Revolution documents, a packet of Mme Roland's letters. Straightway two gentlemen, a M. Dauban and a M. Faugère, each separately engaged on a new edition of Mme Roland's *Mémoires*, took their way to the shop of " Père France," on the Quai Voltaire, each intending to purchase the letters before the sale took place. The first visitor, M. Faugère, did not succeed in making the desired bargain. It was M. Dauban who acquired the precious manuscripts. These letters contained the key to the mystery. By a curious irony of fate, however, their happy possessor, whose " siege was done," apparently neglected to make full use of them. It was left for his rival, Faugère, when the manuscripts of the letters were deposited in the National Library, to complete his edition, to re-read the original in the

light of the letters and to restore the passages in the Memoirs which earlier editors had omitted. One of these passages which had most perplexed earlier editors was the following: *le malheureux—ne supportera pas longtemps un tel coup*. Mme Roland referred to her death. In the blank space was an initial, indistinctly written. It might be an R., but it more closely resembled a B. Bosc, the first editor, had suppressed the passage. Dauban reproduced it with the initial R., which he took to indicate Roland. Faugère insisted that the enigmatical letter was a B. And why? Because of information contained in these letters. For here in these pages "clasped the hands of two hitherto unrecognised lovers." These letters, over which Dauban and Faugère had quarrelled, solved the mystery: they were passionate love letters written by Mme Roland to Buzot, a member of the Convention and a Girondist leader. To Buzot she referred when she wrote of the man who might have been her lover.

The suppression of that passage by Bosc, who published the *Mémoires* for the benefit of the writer's daughter, if the enigmatical initial referred to Buzot, was perfectly comprehensible. Had it indicated Roland its omission would have been inexcusable.

In these letters, written in prison, with death on the scaffold awaiting her, she tells Buzot that she welcomes her captivity because, suffering instead of Roland, it enables her in some measure to atone for her heart's infidelity to her excellent husband. "Also, do you not see?" she adds, "that being alone I remain with you. . . . Do not pity me. Others admire my courage, but they know nothing of my joys." When his letters came to her in prison: "How many times I re-read them," she exclaimed. "I press them to my heart, I cover them with kisses. I had lost hope of receiving any letters from you. Until I heard of your escape I suffered the cruellest anguish. It was intensified by the news of your

accusation. Your courage merited such an atrocity. As soon as I knew you were in Calvados my anxiety was allayed."

Now in the full light of this new discovery could be read that eloquent passage in the *Mémoires, Mes Dernières Pensées*,[1] addressed to Buzot, " *toi que je n'ose nommer!* Thou who shall be better known on the day when our common misfortunes shall be recognised; thou whom the most terrible of the passions hindered not from respecting the barriers of virtue, wilt thou grieve when thou seest me precede thee to a place where we may love one another in innocence, where there shall be nothing to prevent our union? "

Buzot, included in the general accusation brought by the Jacobin Government against the Girondist leaders, had fled first to his native province Normandy, then to la Gironde. There, some few weeks after Mme Roland's execution, in company with his comrade Pétion, he died by his own hand.

Femme très femme, as we have said, has been the usual verdict passed upon Mme Roland. Yet there was one who, manlike, no doubt thinking to praise her, described her as *une femme qui était un grand homme*.

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. II, pp. 267 *et seq.*

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF THE REVOLUTION TOLD BY ITS WOMEN WRITERS

La Révolution de France est une des grandes époques de l'ordre social. Ceux qui la considérent comme un évènement accidentel n' ont porté leurs regards ni dans le passé ni dans l'avenir.
—Mme de Staël.

ONE of the many services women writers rendered to the Revolution was the record they kept and the account they have given of its history. In this respect, as we have seen, Mme de Staël[1] and Mme Roland[2] stand first. After them we must place Mme de Genlis[3] and Mme Jullien,[4] then come Louise Fusil[5] and Charlotte Robespierre.[6]

Mme de Staël's story of the Revolution is remarkable for its critical talent and intellectual

[1] *Considérations sur les Principaux Évènements de la Révolution Française* (*Œuvres Complètes de Mme. de Staël*, ed. 1820, vols. 12-14). Other works by her dealing with the Revolution are *Réflexions sur le Procès de la Reine par une Femme* (1793) and *Réflexions sur la Paix* (1795).

[2] *Mémoires de Madame Roland, nouvelle édition critique, publiée par Cl. Perroud* (2 vols., Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1905). Passages from Mme Roland's *Mémoires* have been so frequently cited in other chapters that they will not be quoted here.

[3] *Les Souvenirs de Félice L.* (1806), and *Mémoires inédites sur le 18 iéme Siècle et la Révolution* (10 vols. Paris, Ladvocat, 1825), *Précis de la Conduite de Mme de Genlis depuis la Révolution.*

[4] *Journal d'une Bourgeoise pendant la Révolution*, 1791-93, *publié par son petit-fils*, Édouard Lockroy (Paris, Calmann Lèvy, 1881).

[5] *Souvenirs d'une Actrice* (Brussels, 1841).

[6] Her *Mémoires* were edited by Laponneraye, the historian who edited the works of her brother, Maximilien Robespierre. The edition of the *Mémoires* here cited is that of Hector Fleischmann, *Charlotte Robespierre et ses Mémoires* (Albin Michel), 1909.

breadth. "It shows," says Professor Bury, "a more dispassionate appreciation of the movement than any of her contemporaries were capable of forming."[1]

Mme Roland's story, written in prison, with the guillotine suspended over her head and all her political hopes disappointed, is inevitably partial and frequently acrimonious. She wrote with a twofold object: one literary, to follow the example of her master, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and to present a sincere and intimate picture of her own mind and heart from her earliest years; the other political, to give such a description of the Girondist party, which she had founded and inspired, as should justify that party's policy.

Mme de Genlis was the most prolific woman writer of the Revolution. *On n' a jamais été plus décidément écriveuse que Mme de Genlis,* wrote Sainte-Beuve.[2] "Had the inkstand not already been invented, she would have invented it." She was indeed the author of at least one hundred and thirty published works. Her object in telling the story of the Revolution was to justify her own conduct and to clear herself from the charge of having been involved in an Orleanist Plot to overthrow the monarchy and place her friend and employer,[3] the Duc d'Orléans, on the throne.

Mme Jullien's diary and letters are some of the most reliable of Revolution documents, for they were written without any idea of publication. Louise Fusil was a gay little butterfly of an actress, who with a novelist's charm wrote what she remembered about the strange sights and scenes of the stormy days through which she had lived. Charlotte Robespierre, who was without any literary gift, wrote at the request of an admirer of her brother's, Laponneraye, who was editing his works.

[1] *The Idea of Progress* (1920), p. 267.
[2] *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. III, pp. 16 and 20.
[3] She was governess to his children.

It will be seen that the reliance we place on the judgments and historical accuracy of these writers must be qualified by a consideration of the strong political bias under which all of them, except perhaps Louise Fusil, wrote.

Indeed, as we try to piece together a more or less chronological outline of the main events of the Revolution from the various stories told by these women writers, we shall find that none of them, not even Mme de Staël, can be trusted to give a completely accurate account. Who can? However, by comparing one record with another, and by allowing for the temperament, the point of view and the political bias of each author, by taking into consideration the object of the work and the period when it was composed, we may derive from these feminine pages some knowledge of the main currents of the Revolution and of its principal actors.

Though all of them were more or less on the side of the Revolution, they belonged to various sections of the revolutionary party, and some of them changed their opinions as the Revolution went on. This was not the case with Mme de Staël and Mme Roland. Their opinions never wavered. The former remained always a constitutional monarchist, the latter always a republican, though perhaps somewhat of an opportunist.

The first of the Revolution Parliaments, the Constituent Assembly, came nearest to realising Mme de Staël's political ideal; the second, the Legislative Assembly, the ideal of Mme Roland. With the policy of the Convention they were alike in disagreement.

As to Mme de Genlis, she was above all things *Genlissarde,* and it is doubtful whether she had any well-grounded political principles. But she professed to love the Revolution with sincerity,[1] especially during its first eighteen months. She thought, so she

[1] *Précis de la Conduite,* etc., p. 72.

says, that the new constitution, however imperfect, could not fail to be "an inestimable benefit, seeing that it had destroyed despotism and other horrible abuses."

Mme Jullien, embracing the Revolution with all her mind and heart, evolved with it from constitutional monarchism to moderate republicanism, and then to extreme Jacobinism. But she remained throughout a recording spectator, and one whose critical sense never entirely deserted her.

Louise Fusil, while moving in Revolution circles, frankly avowed that she had no political principles. "He who said that women always adopt the opinions of the men they love made a curious mistake," she wrote.[1] For her own part, she took care not to espouse the opinions either of her Royalist father or of her Republican husband, both of whom found themselves on the steps of the guillotine from which they were delivered by Robespierre's death.

Charlotte de Robespierre, though less frank than Louise Fusil, was not less devoid of political principles. It was merely the force of circumstances that drew her into the Revolution whirlpool.

These six women wrote at different periods of their own lives. Only two of them, Mme Jullien and Mme Roland, wrote during the Revolution. Charlotte de Robespierre, Louise Fusil, and Mme de Genlis all wrote in old age, and long after the events they recorded. Mme de Staël did not live to be old. But she too wrote her most important work on the Revolution—*Considérations sur les Principaux Evènements de la Révolution Française*—years after the Revolution frenzy had spent itself. This book is her last work, left incomplete, and published in 1818, the year after her death.

Widely different were the objects with which these women wrote. Louise Fusil took up her pen merely to amuse herself and her friends, and to make money;

[1] Op. cit., p. 123.

Charlotte Robespierre for the same reason probably, and also to glorify her brother Maximilien, and to clear herself from the charge of having betrayed him; Mme de Genlis to give herself the *beau rôle*, and to refute accusations made against her, notably those of being involved in an Orleanist conspiracy against the crown, and of having plotted with Dumouriez to overthrow the Government of the Revolution; Mme Jullien to keep her husband informed of what was happening and to build up her son in the doctrine and principles of the Revolution; Mme de Staël to vindicate the memory of her father, Necker, and to demonstrate that a constitutional monarchy is the form of government best suited to the French nation; Mme Roland to justify the political conduct of herself, her husband, and of the Girondist party to which they belonged.

Neither of these eye-witnesses was in Paris throughout the whole of the Revolution. Charlotte Robespierre only arrived in Paris from Arras in the autumn of 1792. Louise Fusil frequently went on tour in the provinces, and towards the end emigrated to England. Mme de Genlis went to England in 1791, returned to Paris for two days in November, 1792, then hovered for weeks on the frontier before starting on migrations through Germany, Switzerland, and Denmark, from which she did not return until 1800. Mme Jullien's first letter from Paris during the Revolution Period is dated the 6th of September, 1789, her last May, 1793. Mme Roland was in Paris from February till September in 1791. She returned in the December of that year to stay until her death on the 8th of November, 1793. Except for short intervals, Mme de Staël was in Paris from the beginning of 1789 until her escape during the prison massacres in September, 1792.

Charlotte Robespierre, as long as she lived with her brothers, watched the Revolution from the innermost keep of the Jacobin fortress; Louise Fusil

from the green-room of the Comédie Française; Mme de Genlis from the Palais Royal; Mme Jullien from the galleries of the Assembly and the Jacobin Club; Mme Roland from the heart of Girondism, from the Ministry of the Interior, and finally from the prisons of the Abbaye, Ste. Pélagie, and the Conciergerie; Mme de Staël from the study of her father, the Controller General of Finance, and from her salon, which she is said to have converted into an ante-chamber of the Constituent Assembly.

It is to Mme de Staël that we go for the best account of the opening months of the Revolution. No one has described more vividly the meeting of the States-General on May 5th, 1789, the first meeting after an interval of one hundred and seventy-five years.[1] The day before, from a window at Versailles, she watched the twelve hundred deputies of France going in procession to church to hear Mass. "It was an imposing spectacle," she writes, "and a novel one for French people. All the inhabitants of Versailles and many from Paris had assembled to see it. This new element in the State, the nature and power of which was as yet unknown, filled with wonder those who had not previously reflected on the rights of nations."

When the black-coated, black-cloaked deputies, the lawyers, merchants, and men of letters of the third estate came by, the democratic heart of Necker's daughter thrilled to see their confident glances, their imposing numbers, and to notice among them nobles who, inspired with eighteenth century doctrines of equality, had forsaken their own class to mingle with the people. One of these revolutionary aristocrats stood out from all the rest. It was impossible to help looking at him, at his immense head of hair—like Samson his strength seemed to depend on it—at his countenance, which its very ugliness rendered expressive, while his entire personality suggested power,

[1] *Considérations*, etc., *Œuvres complètes*, vol. XII, pp. 191, *et seq.*

" ill-regulated but such as might be wielded by a tribune of the people." This striking figure was none other than le Comte de Mirabeau, the dominant figure of the first mild phase of the Revolution.

On the following day even greater things were to happen. The States-General assembled in a building hastily constructed in the Avenue de Versailles.[1] Mme de Staël was one of the many spectators admitted to the opening ceremony. On a raised platform had been placed the throne, the Queen's chair, and seats for the royal family. In front of this kind of stage, sat the Chancellor, Barentin. The three orders were, so to speak, in the pit, the clergy and nobility on the right and left, the deputies of the third estate in the centre. " They had declared beforehand that they would not follow the ancient custom observed at the last meeting of the estates one hundred and seventy-five years before, of kneeling when the King arrived. If the deputies of the third estate," observed Mme de Staël, " had knelt in 1789 everyone, including the purest aristocrats, would have considered the action ridiculous, that is to say, contrary to the ideas of the time."

When Mirabeau appeared a murmur was heard throughout the Assembly. . . . M. Necker, as soon as he entered, was overwhelmed with applause. His popularity was then at its height, and the King might have made good use of him while continuing faithful to the system, the main bases of which he had adopted.

" When the King took his seat on the throne, for the first time I began to be afraid," writes Necker's daughter, " for I noticed that the Queen was greatly moved : she arrived late, and her complexion showed signs of emotion. The King delivered his speech with his usual simplicity. But the countenances of the deputies expressed more energy than the monarch's, and such a contrast was disquieting at a time when,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 194, *et seq.*

nothing being as yet established, strength was necessary on both sides."

The three speeches of that day—the King's, the Chancellor's, and Necker's—all dealt with the financial crisis which alone had driven the Government to summon the States-General for the first time after so long a period. Necker's speech, writes his daughter, pleased no one: neither the Conservative nor the Progressive Party. The former considered Necker to have proved that the summoning of the States-General was unnecessary, by showing that owing to his wise administration the financial crisis was past. The Progressives, on the other hand, having resolved to reform the Constitution, were alarmed to find Necker ignoring this part of their task and confining himself to finance. They accused him of treating this great national parliament as if it had been a mere provincial assembly. Necker was indeed one of those moderate men who are doomed to failure in times of revolution.

Whilst for most people the Revolution would seem to have broken out on May the 5th, the day of the Assembling of the States-General, or on July the 14th, the day of the Bastille's fall, for that egotistical governess, Mme de Genlis, July the 9th seems the all-important historical day because it happened to be the eve of her own birthday. The festival was being celebrated by a pantomime, in the very midst of which the news of risings in Paris was announced. The Orléans governess and her pupils were then at St. Leu, some miles out of the capital. One of the actors in the pantomime, Giroux, a painter, was playing the part of Polyphemus. Eager to see what was happening in the capital, no sooner had he finished his part than he rushed into a cabriolet and drove in full haste to Paris, without even staying to change his clothes. His costume and his eye painted in the middle of his forehead caused so much amazement that he was arrested at the city gate and taken to the guard-

house, where he was detained for over two hours, being minutely interrogated as to the reasons for such an astounding disguise. He was only allowed to go free by invoking the then popular name of his patron, the Duke of Orléans.

For Mme de Staël, and for many others, all the events leading up to the storming and destruction of the Bastille centred round her father. Having failed to persuade the King to renounce his project of concentrating great masses of troops round Paris, Necker resigned on June the 23rd. "So great was his popularity," writes his daughter, "that the news of his resignation brought all Paris out into the streets." And it was doubtless this public manifestation that caused both the King and Queen personally to implore Necker to "save the State" by withdrawing his resignation. This Necker did. But as the King persisted in his design, and as Necker also persisted in his opposition, the Minister found that his advice was being ignored, though he continued to wait on the King daily. Louis was now entirely in the hands of his reactionary counsellors. For Necker, the Whig of the French Revolution, the position was impossible. He told his daughter that every day he expected to be arrested on the morrow. The blow fell on the 11th of July, when the Comptroller General received a letter from the King commanding him to leave France immediately. He showed the King's letter to no one but his wife. It arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, when Mme Necker was holding her salon. Immediately after her guests had departed, without staying to make any preparation for the journey, she set out for the frontier with her husband.

The King had wanted to get Necker away before the people, who adored him, knew of his disgrace and had time to make a demonstration on his behalf.

The precaution was useless. For the news of Necker's dismissal and banishment, when it was bruited abroad, produced the first great manifestation

of the Revolution. On July the 14th, one hundred thousand citizens, as a protest against this treatment of their favourite Minister, captured and destroyed the royal fortress of the Bastille.

Meanwhile Mme de Genlis at Saint Leu was in close touch with Paris. Every day a courier brought out news from the capital. On the 14th, the tidings were such that Mme de Genlis felt she could no longer remain in the country. She and the Duke's children came into Paris, where they found the attack on the Bastille well on the way. From the garden terrace of her friend Beaumarchais, Mme de Genlis, surrounded by her pupils, watched " men, women, and children working with unprecedented ardour " at the demolition of the fortress. " Those avenging hands, annihilating so swiftly the work of many centuries," seemed to her to be " the hands of Providence." And she shared the joy of the destroyers at the fall of a fortress, on which, so she said, she had never been able to look without a shudder, remembering the arbitrary imprisonments within its walls.[1]

To celebrate this memorable occasion Mme de Genlis had an elaborate ornament made, which she used to wear at her breast.[2]

It consisted of a polished stone from the Bastille set in a branch of laurel composed of emeralds, and inscribed in the middle with the word *Liberté* outlined in diamonds; above, also in diamonds, was the planet that shone most brightly on the famous day, and beneath, in the same precious stone, the moon as she appeared on that night. Surmounting the whole was a tricolour cockade in jewels.

The first result of the destruction of the Bastille was Necker's recall. He was on his way from Brussels to Coppet, his country seat in Switzerland, when at Bâle, on July the 20th, he received a command

[1] *Mémoires*, vol. III., p. 217.
[2] Helen Maria Williams, *Letters on the French Revolution*, written in France in the summer of 1790, pp. 24-25.

from the King and an invitation from the National Assembly to return to France and to resume his office. Once again he obeyed. "His return journey was a triumphal progress," wrote Mme de Staël, who by this time had joined her parents and was accompanying them back to France. "The transports of a whole nation" welcomed him. Country women fell on their knees as he passed. Townsmen unharnessed his horses and dragged his carriage themselves. When he reached the capital, all Paris was in the streets, at the windows or on the roofs, crying *Vive M. Necker.* The next day the hero, for whom the Bastille had fallen, went down to the Hôtel de Ville. As, amidst thunders of applause, he addressed the assembled multitude, his daughter, so she tells us, lost consciousness in "the ecstasy of her joy."

In no period of French history have there been so many public festivals and processions as during the Revolution. One of the earliest was the first Festival of the Federation, as it was called, held on le Champs de Mars on the 14th of July, 1790, to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. Many prints of the time portray the picturesque preparations for the fête. And in a manner no less picturesque the graphic Louise Fusil describes them in her "Recollections." The help of all Parisians—men, women, and children—was requisitioned to construct the huge mounds of earth which were to enclose as in an emerald setting the vast Field of Mars. "Everyone went to work." "Bands of volunteers were organised. The theatres were to the fore. Every cavalier chose his lady, to whom he presented a light spade adorned with ribbons and bunches of flowers. Then with a band leading us," says Louise, "we set out joyously. . . . A costume was designed which would not show the dust . . . an overall of grey muslin with dainty slippers and stockings of the same colour, a tricolour scarf, and a big straw hat. . . . Cousin Jacques was my cavalier. He even composed

a poem to celebrate the occasion. We dug, we wheeled the earth about, we ourselves were wheeled, and we had such fun that we hindered the work instead of helping it. Soon our assistance was dispensed with; and we were very sorry, for it had been very amusing."

Mme de Staël regarded this same festival from a much more serious point of view. Looking back on it after the lapse of more than twenty years, it appeared to her as the last expression of a truly national enthusiasm, when royalty and liberty were united, when France was about to possess the constitution most fitted for her, a limited monarchy like that of England. During the preparations Mme de Staël rejoiced to see women of the highest rank mingling with the crowd of voluntary workers[1] and the eighty-three newly constituted departments sending their delegates and national guards to swear to the new constitution—true, it was not yet complete, but its principles were universally approved of.

The constitution and its principles do not concern Louise Fusil. She as an actress is interested in the way in which these provincial delegates amused themselves. She tells how Mirabeau took the delegates from Marseilles to the Palais Royal Theatre. There a play called *Bayard* was being acted, and acted too realistically for these fiery southerners. For when a band of assassins set upon "the knight without reproach," who was being carried on his litter, the Marseillais, horrified to see the incapacitated hero so completely outnumbered, rushed upon the stage and were about to make short work with the assassins when Bayard assured them that he ran no real danger.

By the appointed day—July the 14th—though the help of Louise Fusil and her colleagues had been dispensed with, the preparations for the Festival were complete. In front of the Military School, wrote Mme de Staël, were steps leading to a tent for the

[1] Op. cit., vol. XII., p. 379.

King, the Queen and the whole court. They occupied the amphitheatre. Opposite them was an altar on which Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, was to celebrate Mass, while all around from eighty-three lances planted in the earth waved the banners of the eighty-three newly constituted departments. When M. de La Fayette approached the altar and swore allegiance to the nation, the law and the King, "the oath and the man who swore it filled the people with confidence."

But there was another in whom the people at that time were beginning to place even greater confidence than in La Fayette—that other was Mirabeau. Although Mme de Staël regards him as her father's rival and the leader of the opposition which had led to Necker's final resignation,[1] even she is compelled to admit that had he been more conscientious and less self-seeking, he might have created a strong party independent of the court on the one hand and the mob on the other.

There were indeed many who in those early days looked to Mirabeau to save the State. His death after a few days' illness on April the 2nd, 1791, inflicted a heavy blow on the cause of the Revolution and was mourned throughout the whole kingdom. Louise Fusil,[2] travelling to Lille, was continually stopped on the road and asked whether it was true that Mirabeau was dead. No sooner was his illness known than the street in which he lived was full of an anxious crowd waiting for the bulletins. The news was passed eagerly from one to another; and finally, on the announcement of his death, a long cry was heard accompanied with sobs and groans. The day of his funeral was one of universal mourning: all shops were closed, and anyone who appeared without some sign of grief was howled at by the crowd. In those days of suspicion and excitement the suddenness of his malady

[1] On the 8th of September, 1790.
[2] Op. cit., p. 212.

inevitably gave rise to a rumour, never substantiated, that he had been poisoned by some actresses with whom he was supping when he was taken ill.

With Mirabeau died the last hope of French monarchy. To the King and the nobles it seemed that nothing remained but flight. In June, Louis and his family got away as far as Varennes, where they were overtaken and brought back to Paris. Meanwhile there was an exodus of aristocrats; and an army of these *émigrés* under the King's brother, le Comte d'Artois, was assembling at Coblenz and soliciting the support of European sovereigns to keep Louis on his throne by foreign bayonets.

Ever since the first meeting of the States-General, Mme de Genlis, so she says, had been wishing to leave Paris. She dreaded the disorders which she felt sure would break out.[1]

In the previous year she had had an adventure which made her more anxious than ever to quit her native land. She has described it in detail in her Memoirs,[2] and we may be sure it loses nothing in her telling.

"One day about four o'clock," she writes, "Mademoiselle, M. le Comte de Beaujolais, my niece Henriette de Sercy, Pamela and I drove out in a *calèche*, to see a country house some four leagues[3] out of Paris. We passed by the village of Colombe. Unhappily it was a fair day. Crowds of people from the neighbourhood had gathered in the village. As we drove through, they thronged round our carriage, and took it into their heads that I was the Queen, with Madame and M. le Dauphin, who were fleeing from Paris. They made us get out of the carriage, of which they took possession as well as of the coachman and our servants. In this confusion, the commander of the National Guard, a young man of good family, named

[1] *Prècis de la Conduite de Mme de Genlis depuis la Révolution*, p. 12.
[2] Vol. IV, p. 3, *et seq.*
[3] About six miles.

Baudry, came to our assistance and harangued the people. But he could not pacify them. He succeeded, however, in persuading them to allow him to take us to his house, which was close at hand, by giving them his word of honour that he would keep us there as prisoners until the matter was completely cleared up. He led us through an immense crowd, and as we passed on this short journey we heard many voices crying *à la lanterne*. Finally we entered his dwelling. But a quarter of an hour afterwards, four thousand people[1] besieged the doors, forced them open and rushed into the house in a terrible tumult. M. Baudry courageously and kindly made every possible effort to calm them. We were in the garden; and, as I heard that they were about to arrive,[2] I told my pupils to play at rounders with me. Then sure enough a terrifying crowd of men and women rushed into the garden. They were surprised to see us at play. We stopped our game at once, and I advanced to meet them with the most perfect calm. I said I was the wife of one of their deputies,[3] that I was going to write a note to Paris, and I asked them to send a messenger with it, in order that the matter might be cleared up. They listened but without being convinced; for they cried that it was all lies and that I was writing to ask for reinforcements; and they concluded by saying that if anyone were so foolhardy as to go to Paris they would hang him from the lamp-post when he returned. M. Baudry then spoke to them and extremely well, but in vain. During the dispute, I was taking snuff and I had my snuff-box open. Just as I was proposing that we should be given a guard of ten or twelve men and left in peace until the morning, a wretched peasant, dead drunk, filthy and disgusting, came and took a pinch of snuff out of my box. I threw the rest of the

[1] Surely too great a number for a small village even on fair day.
[2] Not very necessary, one would have thought, to announce the arrival of four thousand people.
[3] Her husband, De Sillery, was a member of the Constituent Assembly.

snuff away and went on with my speech. This action astonished them and had a good effect. Many said that I should not be so calm if I were really the Queen. At this point a man from the crowd, seizing an opportunity when everyone was talking at once, came to me and whispered in my ear: 'I was once Sillery's gamekeeper. Don't be anxious, I am going to Paris.' These words were as balm in Gilead to me.

"Finally all the peasants consented to go away. But they left us a guard of a dozen men, armed with bayonets at the end of their guns, who followed us everywhere. Most of the people were drunk. They stayed in the streets, near the house where we were, so that it was impossible for us to escape. At eight in the evening the mayor of the village arrived to cross-examine us. In order to make himself as imposing as possible, he had put on his tricolour scarf. He asked me gravely *to deliver up to him* all the papers in my pockets. I gave him four or five letters. While he was carefully examining the seals, I urged him to open them. He replied brusquely that he could not read. But he refused to give them back to me. Under these conditions we passed the whole night. Our peasant besiegers in the streets were sleeping themselves into sobriety. When they awoke they were more reasonable. At five in the morning, Sillery's ex-gamekeeper returned from Paris. He had been to the town hall and brought back an order for our release. This good gamekeeper had been quite sure that the people when sober would forget that they had ever refused to let us return to Paris. He was right. No one remembered. They were unanimous in recognising that I was not the Queen, and their wrath gave place to repentance. They clamoured to escort us back to Paris in triumph. What a story that would have made for the newspapers!"

It was not until a year after this incident, on the 11th of October, 1791, that Mme de Genlis succeeded in getting away from France. Alleging as a pretext

that the health of Mlle d'Orléans required change of air, she left for England, taking with her the Princess and Pamela, and escorted by the deputy Pétion, who was afterwards to become so prominent. Eight months after her departure, the French Government declared war on Austria, whose Emperor was thought to be in league with the *émigré* army.

"To-day the King has proclaimed war," wrote Mme Jullien[1] to her husband on the 20th of April, 1792. "His speech . . . was simple and constitutional; the President's reply laconic and just. The number of women whom the commissioners had allowed to penetrate into the sanctuary so upset the good deputies that the session was adjourned before two o'clock, just after the King had left."

The war was unfortunate for France from the beginning. "You have already heard of Dillon's defeat and of his unhappy fate" (he was massacred by his own troops), wrote Mme Jullien to her husband on May the 3rd, 1792. "A second affair before Mons, commanded by M. de Biron, was also a failure. Our aristocrats display a horrible joy, which I hope will be but short lived," she continues. "We can scarcely breathe, we are so anxious for news. . . . Mirabeau was right: war is absorbing, and that is unfortunate when there is so much else needing our attention." A fortnight later Mme Jullien writes that she is persuaded that the stagnation of the armies results from a plot. The conspirators were, to use her own phrase, "all the constituted authorities," and their aim, the subversion of the new order, equally disliked by the ambitious powerful and by the wicked wealthy. This supposed Royalist conspiracy becomes a veritable obsession for Mme Jullien and for many others. She hears in the street below the cry "Infernal plot of 'les Feuillants'[2] discovered; innocence of the Jacobins established." "To obtain material proofs of this plot

[1] *Journal d'une Bourgeoise*, pp. 68, 69.
[2] A club of monarchists who had seceded from the Jacobins.

is impossible," she writes. "Only the idiotic and the vulgar demand them. Moral certitude alone is possible because these wicked conspirators are far too crafty to leave any trace of their malevolent designs."

Meanwhile Paris is growing more and more agitated, especially in the Palais Royal and the Tuileries Gardens. "We returned from the Tuileries Gardens about six o'clock" (in the evening), writes Mme Jullien on May the 23rd, 1792. "All Paris was there. . . . We saw two incidents which greatly moved the crowd. First, it was an officer who struck a colporteur because he was selling a pamphlet justifying the Jacobins. The people would have set upon him had not a member of the National Guard, while reproving the officer, promised the people that he should be brought to justice. Nevertheless, he did not escape being knocked about, shaken, and howled at, and finally accompanied to the guard-house by some two or three thousand souls. All this happened on the Feuillants Terrace (the terrace of the Feuillants Monastery, adjoining the riding-school where the Assembly sat) at the very gates of the palace. I was sitting on the parapet of the terrace. It was like being on a rock on the shore of a raging ocean. No sooner was calm established than another storm broke out. Again waves of people rushed from all directions. It was the poet Roncher, who wanted to harangue a group of people, and whose aristocratic ardour they were about to cool by throwing him into the water. Happily a Justice of the Peace put up his little white wand, and the docile crowd, overawed by the sudden appearance of this symbol of the law, contented itself with demanding that Roncher be sent out of the Gardens, and two thousand conducted him to the gate near the Pont Royal, so that from my seat on the parapet I saw this little scene quite close."

"Still no news from the frontier," she writes on May the 6th, 1792, "and the month of May over. The stagnation, the inactivity of our armies contrasted

with French impetuosity makes those who have long-sighted spectacles tremble."

Meanwhile at home patriotism burns brightly. "Yesterday," she continues, "a man from Bordeaux laid fifty-seven thousand francs in coin on the altar of the fatherland." "The market roughs (*les forts de la halle*) brought eight hundred francs to the altar in the Senate House. They said that the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Constitution ought to be carried at the head of the army like the Ark."

On the 16th of June she tells her son that the King has partly changed his Ministry. Roland, Minister of the Interior, Servan of War, and Clavière of Finance have been dismissed. She recommends her son to "read attentively in 'le Moniteur' Roland's letter to the King (generally thought to have been inspired by Mme Roland). It brought him into disgrace with the Court, it will win him the admiration and the esteem of the whole of France. The blindness of kings is the scourge of humanity. Truth cannot come near them, and the fools think that by rejecting they annihilate it, whilst in reality they only make it more visible. Roland's memory will be immortal."

On June the 19th, the eve of the first mob attack on the Tuileries, she writes to her husband: "To-morrow the people will rise. They will march to the National Assembly to demand sweeping measures." Her servant, Marion, walks round the Tuileries Gardens and finds more people congregated there than there are grains of sand. All speak the same language. All demand that the King shall either support the Constitution or openly declare himself its enemy.

The morning of the eventful twentieth Mme Jullien spends in the Assembly listening to the speeches of Vergniaud, the Girondist orator, and others, discussing whether or no the people's demand shall be granted and the sections of Paris admitted to the Assembly Hall.

Finally (at half-past one) they are allowed to come

in. Forty thousand[1] citizens enter through the door opposite the Place Vendôme.

"The true sovereign was really majestic," she writes. "For two hours by my watch it defiled through the hall in perfect order, in magnificent tranquillity.[2] There were citizens armed with pikes, national guards, hussars, grenadiers, troops of the line, ladies, women of the people, all mingling in a spirit of equality and fraternal unity. They bore the sacred tables of the Rights of Man, and a thousand emblems of the Constitution and of Liberty. Military music played the *ça ira*. The regularity of this procession was broken from time to time by various incidents. When the President of the Assembly was being saluted, flags got entangled and there were cries hailing the accident as a symbol of reunion. One fellow, looking like a clodhopper, held up the whole procession while he said a few words about the war, which were full of force and common sense. M. Santerre[3] came last. In the name of the suburbs (*les faubourgs*) he presented the Assembly with a superb banner. As the last group was passing through the hall, the President stopped it to announce that the brave Lückner had taken Courtray and captured more than a thousand prisoners of war, and that the Germans in the city had cried 'Long live the French nation.'

"The procession passed out of the hall on to the Feuillants Terrace towards the Tuileries Palace, which they completely surrounded. They entered it by the gates on the Place du Carrousel."

Mme Jullien now ceases to be an eye-witness. In describing the scenes enacted within the palace she cites as authorities her hairdresser, who said the

[1] The figures of Mme Jullien are hardly more reliable than those of Mme de Genlis. More trustworthy authorities give the number as twenty thousand.

[2] Dancing and singing *ça ira* say others.

[3] The famous brewer of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine is said to have organised the procession and the subsequent attack on the Tuileries.

next morning that the invaders had displayed "the greatest moderation and the most profound wisdom," and her faithful servant Marion, who apparently entered the Tuileries with the crowd. There she saw astounding things, "the people in the King's house, presenting him with two cockades, one tricolour and the other white; the King choosing the tricolour, and putting on the red cap" (the red Phrygian cap of liberty). Superb things were said to the King, and doubtless (apparently she was not quite sure about this) he was presented with the petition (asking him to withdraw his veto from the decrees establishing an armed camp of patriots round Paris and the transportation of the non-juring clergy).

Mme Jullien, now an ardent Jacobin, was growing more and more impatient of the Legislative Assembly, whose meetings seemed to her "a sublime farce," and whose actions she thought calculated to irritate the masses.

The June attack on the Tuileries had been no more than an attempt to frighten the King into granting his people's demands. But as July drew into August and the fateful tenth approached, Mme Jullien began to perceive terrible stormclouds lowering. On the 8th she wrote, "Nothing but a miracle can save us." On the 9th, "the tocsin has sounded the alarm. The streets are full of people. Trembling women look from the windows and question the passers-by."

Then, as in all revolutions, there were many who failed to see what was coming. On that very evening, to Louise Fusil the city seemed tranquil. The people appeared to be mainly occupied with dancing at (the Parisian) Vauxhall, while the women were busy making those frocks in the Coblenz[1] fashion, which had now succeeded *le costume constitution* and *le chapeau Révolution*.[2] Louise, on that eventful evening, was

[1] The headquarters of the emigrant army.

[2] See *La Révolution Française*, by Armand Dayot, who reproduces these costumes from engravings in the Galerie des Estampes.

making a Coblenz scarf when her husband and a friend came in wearing uniform. But this had no significance for what she called her mind. It was not until the following day, when she saw the squares and streets strewn with corpses, that Mme Louise began to take the Revolution seriously.

At the close of that day Mme Jullien wrote a description of it to her husband. "Listen and shudder," she began.

"The night was uneventful. . . . The Tuileries had been filled with National Guards. The Assembly also had its triple guard. At six in the morning the King had reviewed his Swiss Guards on the Swing-bridge. At eight he went to the National Assembly. . . . Suddenly, the Swiss appeared at all the palace windows and fired on the National Guards.[1] The gates of the château opened, and, bristling with cannon, let fly a volley on the people. The Swiss redoubled their firing. The National Guard, with barely two rounds of ammunition, was riddled. The people fled, then rallied in rage and despair. The Marseilles volunteers were so many heroes performing prodigies of valour. The château was stormed. Heaven's justice opened up a way for the invaders, and the Swiss expiated in death the base treason of which they had been the instruments. The whole royal family, mere toys in the hands of a blood-thirsty faction, had taken advantage of a favourable moment to seek refuge with the Assembly. They were conducted to the reporters' gallery, where they still are. No newspaper has appeared. I have not heard a word of the Assembly, and, incredible as it may sound, the Assembly may have been calmer to-day than at any time in its existence. To-day, the 10th of August, was to have been the day of the counter-Revolution."

Three weeks later, Mme Jullien was describing the first of those terrible days when the furious

[1] Here, especially, accounts of what happened are very conflicting.

populace invaded the jails and butchered between twelve and sixteen hundred prisoners.

"Would you believe it?" she writes, "I spent from six till eight in the Tuileries Gardens. Crowds everywhere, agitated yet orderly. Paris has no night now. When daylight fades there are illuminations, two magnificent pyramids of light on the great lake, and illuminated booths in the side-walks. The Feuillants Terrace was as bright as day, covered with groups of men, women, and children, all ready to follow the most generous impulses or to give effect to the most terrible resolutions."

Then her letter suddenly assumes a more tragic tone. Six masons, returning from work, tell of the horrors that are being perpetrated. They have seen piles of corpses at the gates of the prisons. The emissaries of the people, fearing lest in the event of the Prussians marching into Paris the imprisoned anti-Revolutionaries should rise and join them, have been visiting each jail in turn, and after some kind of inquiry, have massacred the prisoners in cold blood. This terrible carnage had seemed to them the only way of assuring the safety of the wives and families of the heroes fighting at the front. "My pity," writes Mme Jullien, "makes me weep over the fate shared alike by the guilty and the innocent. My God! have mercy on a people provoked to such horrible bloodshed. Impute it not . . ." Then, too deeply moved to write more, she throws down her pen in the middle of a sentence.

About the time of the prison massacres Charlotte Robespierre came to Paris to join her brothers Maximilien and Auguste, who were both members of the National Convention. The three Robespierres were invited to dine at Mme Jullien's. "I am to make the acquaintance of this patriotic family," she writes, "the head of which has so many friends and so many enemies." Mme Jullien was quick to see into the hearts of this famous trio. In her

portraits there is a fine aloofness of judgment which we miss in the portraits of Mme Roland. Maximilien's hostess had previously criticised him somewhat severely. His literary style, as displayed in the newspaper *Le Défenseur de la Constitution,* she had thought careless and uninspiring. In July, 1792, he had seemed to her to be losing credit. She was distressed to hear him in the Jacobin Club denouncing the great Girondins, Vergniaud and Brissot. She regrets his ironical tone in his controversy with her friend, Pétion, who, after June the 20th, had been suspended from his office as Mayor of Paris. "Pétion is worthy of respect," she writes; "Robespierre should not despise him. Were Robespierre my husband, I would throw myself at his feet and implore him in the name of the public good to forget his private vengeance." On nearer acquaintance, however, she thought better of Robespierre. The family as a whole pleased her. They convinced her that Maximilien had had nothing whatever to do either with the August attack on the Tuileries or with the prison massacres. She cannot believe that Nature would have endowed an evil soul with so handsome a countenance. But he seems to her about as "well fitted to be a party leader as to take the moon in his teeth." An abstract thinker, dry and academic, he is as gentle as a lamb,[1] and as serious as Young. "I see," she writes to her husband, "that he has not your tender sensibility. However, I like to believe that he desires the good of mankind, though it is rather from a sense of justice than from any goodwill." The younger Robespierre Mme Jullien liked less. He was more animated than his brother, but less distinguished and of a petulance likely to lead to mischief-making. In well-chosen neutral tints Mme Jullien paints the

[1] Charlotte Robespierre (*Mémoires,* ed. cit., p. 200) says that at Arras Robespierre's aunt used to describe him "as an angel, possessing all the moral virtues, but in danger of falling a dupe and a victim into the hands of the wicked."

colourless Charlotte Robespierre. She is "naïve and natural like your aunts," she writes to her son. "She came two hours before the others. We had a woman's talk and I made her tell me about their home lives; simple and frank like our own."

Both Mme Jullien's Diary and Charlotte's own Memoirs suggest that the virtuous Robespierre family had a jaundiced outlook on life, that they were a bilious trio, loving but not understanding even one another. Certainly from the time of the arrival of Charlotte and Auguste in Paris their family relations were far from harmonious. Charlotte was jealous of her brother's friends, especially of the Duplays, the family of a master cabinet-maker of la Rue St. Honoré, with whom he had lodged ever since the night of the Champs de Mars massacre, when he, like the Roberts, had deemed it imprudent to return to his own home.[1] These hospitable people, so Charlotte tells us, received her and her brother when they arrived from Arras. But, from the beginning, Charlotte was displeased at finding herself and Auguste lodged in rooms remote from their brother's. She tells how finally she persuaded Maximilien to leave the Duplays and to establish himself with his brother and sister in a flat of their own in la Rue St. Florentin. But there he fell ill, and Mme Duplay, accusing Charlotte of neglecting her brother, fetched him away. Then, of course, it was war to the knife between the two women, as the following incident, told by Charlotte, shows.

"I often sent my brother jam or preserved fruits or some other dainty of which he was very fond," writes Charlotte. "Whenever she saw my servant arriving with such a gift, Mme Duplay would fly into a temper. One day she said to my servant who had brought some pots of jam, 'Take them away, I won't have her poisoning Robespierre.'" The servant did

[1] See *post*, p. 174.

not fail to report those words to her mistress. "The terrible blasphemy!" exclaims Charlotte. "Instead of making a scene, which would have annoyed my brother," she continues, "I devoured my grief and my indignation in silence." Soon afterwards she quarrelled with her younger brother Auguste. Here again her brother's friends were the cause of the dispute. She never saw Auguste afterwards, and Maximilien she met but rarely.

But to go back to the autumn of 1792. In November Mme de Genlis, accompanied by Pamela, returned from England, and paid a visit of one night only to Paris. The appearance of the capital and the ferocious and insolent air of the people in the streets justified her worst fears. Only the desire to give Mademoiselle d'Orléans up to the Duke, her father, and to resign her post as governess had induced Mme de Genlis to risk a return. She had begun to realise that the misfortune of being connected with the house of Orléans was exposing her to all kinds of calumny and persecution. But she found it impossible to get rid of Mademoiselle. By bringing the Princess back to Paris against her father's wishes—Egalité had sent courier after courier to Mme de Genlis forbidding her to return—she had placed her in the greatest danger, for the Convention had included Mademoiselle in the list of proscribed enemies. Even the selfishness of Mme de Genlis could not withstand Egalité's urgent entreaty that she would continue in office if only for a fortnight longer, until another governess could be found, and that meanwhile she would hurry out of France, taking Mademoiselle with her. Accordingly, on the following morning, she bade farewell to her husband, De Sillery, whom she was never to see again,[1] and to Egalité, whom she wishes her readers to believe that she then saw for the last time. "M. le Duc d'Orléans," she writes, "gloomier than ever, gave me

[1] De Sillery was guillotined on the 31st of October, 1793.

his arm and led me to the carriage. I was greatly moved. Mademoiselle was in tears, her father pale and trembling. He stood motionless at the carriage door, his eyes fixed on me. His sad lugubrious glance seemed to implore pity. 'Farewell, Madame,' he said. His broken voice touched me deeply. Unable to utter a single word, I gave him my hand. He took it, pressed it, then turning to the postillions, he gave them the signal and we started."[1]

Their destination was Tournay, which was then just across the frontier. There Mme de Genlis stayed much longer than the stipulated fortnight, for no new governess arrived to take her place.

"I did not waste my time at Tournay," she writes. "We led a well ordered life there. A person in the town lent me books. I read aloud every day for an hour and a half. I played the harp with Mademoiselle . . . . she painted flowers, so did I. Then we did all kinds of fancy work. I taught her to make charming little straw baskets. The parish church was but a few steps from the house. We went to Mass there every day. And our time passed swiftly and even agreeably. As was my custom, I sat up alone every evening for two or three hours writing my diary and jotting down my reflections."

It was at Tournay, writes Mme de Genlis, that "we heard of the horrible catastrophe which ended the life of the unfortunate Louis XVI.[2] From the bottom of my heart I deplored this terrible event, and for more than one reason." Then she gives a letter from her husband saying that he had voted for *la reclusion* (imprisonment) *jusqu' à la paix*, that in doing so he had obeyed his conscience, knowing very well that by expressing such an opinion he had pronounced his own death sentence. Sillery was not mistaken. He was guillotined nine months after the King he had tried to save.

[1] Egalité was guillotined on the 6th of November, 1793.
[2] On the 21st of January, 1793.

It was at Tournay in March, 1793, that the Commander-in-Chief of the Revolution armies, Dumouriez, went over to the enemy. Mme de Genlis was accused of being implicated in this treachery. In her *Précis de la Conduite de Mme de Genlis depuis la Révolution,* she attempts to clear herself of this charge. "Of all the lies concocted about me," she writes, "this one is the most absurd and the least probable. . . . True, I was charmed with so famous a man. But never for a single instant was I alone in tête-à-tête with him."

Mme de Genlis admits, however, that during the time that they were both at Tournay, from March 26th to 31st, she entertained the General to dinner three times. When Dumouriez left Tournay for St. Armand on the 31st, Madame and her pupils followed him there, travelling in a *berline* with the blinds down, wearing large brimmed hats and thick veils, which completely hid their faces. Madame also admits that on hearing that the conspirator's object was the restoration of a constitutional monarchy she remarked that it ought never to have been abolished. "But," she added, "after having shed so much blood to establish a Republic, it was better to adhere to it."

We cannot follow Mme de Genlis through all her subsequent wanderings, neither can we enter into the details of her temporary rupture with the Orléans family and of her parting with Mademoiselle. But one incident of those travels must be related. It occurred in July, 1794, when she was staying in a boarding house at Altona. There, in a curious manner, she heard of Robespierre's death. "It was one hour after midnight," she writes. "I was very surprised to hear continuous knocking at my door, and my astonishment increased when I recognised the voice of my neighbour, M. de Kercy, who was generally so quiet. He was crying: 'Open your door, open quickly. I must kiss you.' When I refused to gratify so singular a desire, he repeated several times: 'You

yourself will wish to kiss me. Open your door.' Finally I obeyed. M. de Kercy threw himself on my neck and said, ' The Tyrant is no more. Robespierre is dead.' Then in truth I did embrace my visitor, and with all my heart." The next day, adds Mme de Genlis, they heard that the effect of the news on one of Robespierre's supporters in the neighbourhood had been to make him fall down stark dead.

For an account of the events preceding Robespierre's death, of the famous 9th of Thermidor, when the Incorruptible was arrested by the Convention and took refuge at the Hôtel de Ville, one turns naturally to the Memoirs of Robespierre's sister, but only to meet with disappointment; for Charlotte's account of one of the most critical days in her own life and in the whole course of the Revolution is brief, and totally without any personal touch.

Having discussed in summary fashion the moving scene in the Convention, having described briefly his flight to l'Hôtel de Ville, she says, "The Thermidorians attacked the Hôtel de Ville with troops that the Convention had placed at their disposal. The terrible decree of outlawry had scattered all those who had rallied round my brother to defend him. He was seized . . . but I cannot continue the story. History must fill in the blank left by my sorrow."

One sympathises with Charlotte when she shrinks from relating the events of a day which must have filled her with anguish. Nevertheless, one would like to know where she was and how she behaved on the 9th of Thermidor. Did she attempt to fly to her brother's side or did she simply cower indoors? Did she stay all day in the place where she was then living in the Hôtel de Cherbourg, near the St. Eustache Church and only a few minutes walk away from the Hôtel de Ville where her brother's fate was being decided? As to her doings on the next day, the 10th of Thermidor, Charlotte leaves us in no doubt. "I

rushed into the street," she says, "my head in a whirl, despair in my heart."

She sought for her brothers when she was sure of not finding them, when they were in prison. But had she sought them on the previous day? "I run here and there," she continues. "I entreat to be allowed to see them. I drag myself to the soldiers. They repulse me, laugh at my tears, insult me, strike me. A few pitiful people drag me away. My mind wandered. I did not know what happened or what became of me. . . . When I came to myself I was in prison."

Charlotte had been arrested on the 13th of Thermidor (the 30th of July). Her replies, during her examination by the Revolutional Tribunal, show her anxious to save her own life at the expense of her brother's reputation. After asserting, and probably with truth, that she had frequently remonstrated with Maximilien as to his actions and the kind of company he kept, she adds that had she for a moment guessed the nature of the infamous plot (*complot infâme*) in which he was involved, she would have denounced him to the authorities rather than have seen her country imperilled.[1]

We must not be hard on Charlotte. She was no heroine, only a dull peevish woman, totally incapable of comprehending the vast issues at stake; and now she was trembling with fear and possessed by one idea alone, that of saving her own life. Her imprisonment lasted fifteen days. At the close of her Memoirs she tells a confused story of a lady who came to her in prison and made her sign some paper, the contents of which she did not completely understand. She fears lest the "cowardly Thermidorians" may have used it against her brothers' friends. With this reflection her Memoirs close. The paper to which she referred has not yet been identified. Perhaps it never

[1] *Fleischmann*, op. cit., p. 87.

existed. On the authority of Auguste Robespierre we know Charlotte's memory to have been unreliable.

Charlotte, having adopted her mother's name of Carraut, lived on in obscurity until 1830. Two years before her death she inserted in her will a clause intended to rehabilitate her brother Maximilien's memory: *Voulant avant de payer, à la nature,* she wrote, *le tribut que tous les mortels lui doivent, faire connaître mes sentiments envers la mémoire de mon frère ainé, je déclare que je l'ai toujours connu pour un homme plein de vertu.*[1]

By a strange coincidence Mme de Genlis and Charlotte Robespierre died in the same year. The former had long before then returned to France.

When, in 1799, the name of Mme de Genlis was erased from the list of *émigrés* and she was permitted to return to her native land, she found it greatly changed.[2] The streets had all been re-named, and the names of philosophers substituted for those of saints. Many of the cabs in the streets she recognised as the confiscated carriages of her friends who had perished in the Revolution, and in the shop windows she saw their books, pictures, and furniture for sale. But perhaps what struck her the most was the change that had come over the manners and habits of the women. Young women she thought much less reserved than they had been. They would recline on a sofa without throwing a rug over their feet, so that the slightest movement might reveal a foot or even part of a leg. The girls of the period would call young men by their Christian names, would address their girl friends by the second person singular. Such things, said Mme de Genlis, were never thought of before the Revolution. Men, so it seemed to the returned *émigrée,* treated

[1] Desirous, before paying that tribute to Nature which all mortals owe to her, to make known the sentiments evoked by my eldest brother's memory, I declare that I ever knew him to be a man abounding in virtue. See Lenôtre, *Vieilles Mansions Vieux Papiers, sèrie* I, p. 43.

[2] *Mémoires,* pp. 69-71.

women with less respect than in the good old times, when, she would have us believe, they always addressed the fair sex with reverence and in a lower tone of voice than they would use when speaking to men. Existence in so coarse and vulgar a world must have been terrible indeed for the exquisite Mme de Genlis. Yet she contrived to live on to a ripe old age, through the Napoleonic period and the reigns of the two Bourbons of the elder line, and not to die until her pupil, Louis Philippe, was well established on the throne.

CHAPTER VI

MINOR WOMEN WRITERS OF THE REVOLUTION

Playwrights and Novelists, Pamphleteers and Journalists

WE shall find it convenient to divide the minor women writers of the Revolution into two classes : first, those who contrived to keep the Revolution out of their works, though they moved in Revolution circles; second, those who found it impossible to avoid dealing with the great convulsion in some, if not in all their writings. For our purpose here the last class is of course by far the most important and must be dealt with at length. But beforehand let us dismiss rather summarily the first class, of which we need indeed only mention one representative : Julie Candeille. She claims attention, not only because of her intimate association with many of the women who figure in these pages, but because she was a brilliant social personage endowed with many gifts, at once musician and novelist, playwright and actress, and because she was a prominent figure in revolutionary society, although she seems never to have taken part in politics. We have met her already, playing on the piano at Mme Talma's, when Marat made his violent intrusion. Several histories of the Revolution[1] describe her as the mistress of Vergniaud, the most eloquent of the Girondist orators. But Vergniaud's biographer, Vatel, completely destroys this legend.

[1] See Lamartine, *Les Girondins*, Louis Blanc, Michelet and Hamel in his *Robespierre*.

He proves from Julie's own words and other evidence that she had never even spoken to Vergniaud. Mlle Candeille made her début as an actress at the early age of fifteen, in 1782, at the opera, as Iphigénie in Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Though always referred to as "Mademoiselle Candeille," she was in reality thrice married. Thus she made good use of that right to divorce which the De Goncourts declared was the only advantage woman obtained from the Revolution.[1] The so-called Mlle Candeille divorced two husbands. The second she had met under rather unusual circumstances. When she was playing at la Comédie Française, an elderly coach-builder of Brussels came to Paris to break off a match between his son and one of Julie's fellow-actresses. While soliciting Julie's aid in the matter, the coach-builder fell in love with his collaboratress, and instead of preventing one wedding, found himself celebrating two. After divorcing the coach-builder Julie took to herself a third husband, with whom she seems to have contrived to spend the remainder of her days; they extended until 1834; for Julie was one of the few people who succeeded in living through the Revolution.

As an actress she made no mark, except in a play of her own composition, interspersed with songs set to music of her own, and entitled *Catherine ou la Belle Fermière*,[2] played at le Théâtre de la République, in 1797, with the authoress in the principal part. It took the town by storm. The piece was indeed just that blend of sentimentality à la Jean Jacques, and artificiality à la Watteau which would delight playgoers of the day. The scene is laid in the country, where fine ladies and gentlemen, mingling with peasants and peasantesses, indulge in picnics and other rustic pursuits. Catherine herself, the beautiful *fermière*, is, as we might expect, a great lady in disguise. The

[1] See *post*, p. 273.

[2] *Comédie en 3 Actes en prose mêlée de chants . . . paroles et musique de Julie Candeille*, Paris Théâtre de la République, 27th of November, 1792.

wickedness of townsfolk in general and of her husband, who at length fell a victim to his sins, have driven her to take refuge in the heart of the provinces. There Catherine plays at the simple life as Marie Antoinette had done in her " Hameau " at Versailles. In the end her identity is discovered and her love of simplicity rewarded by marriage with a husband who, though he shares her tastes, is of her own station. It is a light, graceful little play. That the authoress herself acted the principal part no doubt contributed to its success, for Julie Candeille was very charming, so much so that some of her sister authoresses grew jealous of her attractions.

Not long after the performance of *la Belle Fermière* at the Théâtre de la République, another play by a woman was acted there. It was *l'Entrée de Dumouriez à Bruxelles,* by Olympe de Gouges, a wild and incoherent medley with three women soldiers as heroines. Hissed on the first night, it was withdrawn after the second performance: the audience refused even to hear it out. After repeated interruptions the occupants of the pit jumped on to the stage and began to dance the carmagnole; others demanded the name of the author. Olympe, the vainest woman that ever lived, had concealed it from fear of having her head turned by the congratulations that she never doubted the play well deserved. Mlle Candeille now came forward on the stage, and was about to reveal the secret when she was anticipated by the authoress, who, from her box, quivering with rage, cried aloud: " It is I, citizens; but if my play seems to you bad it is because it was horribly acted." Howls and roars of laughter greeted this announcement and followed the discomfited playwright as she fled from the theatre. But Olympe was not one to suffer in silence. A few days later she attacked actors and actresses in print, and accused them of having made a veritable pantomime of her work in order to please that monster of perfidious jealousy, Mlle Candeille.

Louise Fusil, also an actress, seems to have been almost as bitter against Julie, though she had less cause than Olympe. In the *Souvenirs,* to which we have already referred, Louise acknowledged that Julie had a fine figure, a glorious complexion, that she played divinely on the harp and the piano, that she was well educated and witty and successful, but, she adds, "among the fairies invited to her christening one had been forgotten, *une petite fée Carabosse,* who had taken her revenge by endowing the infant with a quality that would nullify all her advantages, the quality of affectation which would render her always ridiculous." Of all those who wrote about Julie, Louise Fusil was the only person who made this discovery. Mme de Genlis, who devotes several eulogistic pages to her, does not mention it.

Though in France to-day Mlle Candeille has long ceased to be remembered, the curious may find several of her works preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Among them are two historical novels, *Agnès de France ou le 12ieme Siècle* and *Mathilde, reine de France;* another novel, *Geneviève ou le Hameau, histoire de huit journées;* a moral tale, *Lydie ou les Mariages Manqués,* a subject on which the authoress must have been an expert; an Essay on Human Felicity entitled *Dictionnaire du Bonheur,* in two volumes, and *Le Commissionnaire,* a prose comedy in two acts. In turning over the pages of these volumes I have been unable to discover that they possess any literary merit. They are merely interesting on account of their charming and popular authoress.

Now we must turn to those women pamphleteers and journalists who by their pens helped to make the Revolution. *Avec des plumes,* wrote Père Duchesne in one of his so-called patriotic letters, *on a fait danser une gavotte à Dame Bastille; avec des plumes on a ebranlé les trônes des tyrans, remué le globe et piqué*

tous les peuples pour marcher à la liberté. More than one epoch-making State document, nominally a man's work, was in reality a woman's. Mme Roland is known to have revised her husband's political tracts, manifestoes, and dispatches when he was Minister of the Interior.[1] She is said to have written that momentous letter to the King which closed the first Girondin ministry in June, 1792.[2] From Mme de Genlis' prolific brain, some say, proceeded the speech made by the Duke of Orléans to the Jacobin Club (afterwards embodied in a letter to the National Assembly), renouncing all rights to the throne. The appearance of an immense mass of pamphlets and newspapers representing every shade of opinion, faction, and party was a striking feature of revolutionary society.

Pamphlets were written by women as well as men. The most exuberant of these revolutionary women pamphleteers was a writer we have already mentioned in this chapter, Olympe de Gouges, Mlle Candeille's unsuccessful rival. Olympe is the queerest and most quixotic of the revolutionary women. As we read her life story, conflicting emotions stir within us: we are moved alternately to admiration and contempt, to tears and to laughter; for running athwart her whimsies and caprices, her arrogance and her vanity, are fine strains of heroic courage and maternal pity. Moreover, true Frenchwoman as she is, despite her vagaries, we shall find her now and again urging against the opinions of her party, a course which, as subsequent events have proved, would have been one of true wisdom. Next to her pity the quality that one most admires in Olympe is the independence of her judgment.

As her exuberance would lead one to expect, she

[1] Dumouriez (*Vie et Mémoires*—Paris, 1823—bk. VII, chap. xi) says Roland *avait le malheur de se laisser conduire par une femme, bel esprit, qu'il avouait avoir donnè le poli à ses volumineux ouvrages.*

[2] *Ante*, p. 118.

was a *méridionale*, born at Montauban in 1748. Her real name was Marie Gouze; Olympe was her mother's name, which her daughter adopted because it sounded majestic. Though the so-called Olympe tried to make out that her descent was noble, her father was probably a butcher; and there seems no doubt that Olympe married a cook, one Pierre Aubry, by whom she had at least one child, a son. He alone can be identified, though there are references to another. Whether her husband died or whether she left him seems uncertain. At any rate, in the early eighties she was in Paris and possessed of a considerable fortune. Once beautiful, numerous passionate experiences had left their mark upon her beauty. Olympe determined to be conspicuous at all costs, and finding she could no longer queen it in the courts of love, although so uneducated as barely to be able to write, she began to lift her eyes to the heights of Parnassus. For her, obstacles only existed in order to be overcome; so, to make up for her literary defects, she engaged, she says, ten secretaries. They were not too many; for her exalted imagination and fluent speech wore out four in a few hours. She started with thirty plays in her head. Only ten of them were ever written, and not all of these were printed. Two at least, *l'Esclavage des Nègres* and *l'Heureux Naufrage*, were accepted, and the first played at la Comédie Française. When this theatre refused a third play, *Molière Chez Ninon*, Olympe, who liked to fancy herself the Ninon of the eighteenth century, became furious, and with that "itching to write" (*démangeaison d'écrire*) which, she says, embittered her life, she protested in a booklet, *Les Comédiens Démasqués*, against treatment which she asserted to be grossly unjust.

But by this time she was well launched on her career of political pamphleteer. Two at least of her pamphlets appeared in the first year of the Revolution. They and those that follow them have titles long and loud-sounding enough to introduce some lengthy

treatise. One is surprised therefore to find them heading no more than a few pages. Thus, for instance, the title of one of the earliest of these writings, *Action Héroique d'une Française ou la France Sauvée par les Femmes*, would lead one to expect at least the biography of a second Joan of Arc. Instead we find no more than four brief pages urging women to sacrifice their jewels in their country's cause; and she does not even tell of one who did so. The brevity of these manifestoes[1]—for they were little more—is accounted for by the fact that they were intended to be posted on the hoardings. She was also assiduous in sending round her writings to the newspapers, accompanied by a letter demanding notice. In paying for this publicity as well as for the printing and distribution of her works Olympe spent the last remnants of her fortune.

Disappointing as they are for the most part, it is in these writings that we catch here and there a gleam of what we now recognise to have been political insight. Thus in the matter of the dispute between the three estates as to voting by head or by order in 1789, Olympe suggests that each deputy should write down clearly on a piece of paper the instructions he had received on this subject from his constituents, that the papers should be placed in a ballot-box and counted, and that the method which was advocated by the majority of the papers should be adopted.

Like most early Revolutionists, Olympe's sym-

[1] Their titles occupy five pages of the printed catalogue of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Here are some of them: *Adresse au Don Quichotte du Nord suivi du Silence du Véritable Patriotisme* (1792), 16 pp. *Arrêt de Mort que présente Olympe de Gouges contre Louis Capet*, 4 pp. *Avis pressant à la Convention par une vraie républicaine*, 16 pp. *Le Bon Sens Français ou l'Apologie des Vrais Nobles, dédiée aux Jacobins*, 56 pp. *Correspondence de la Cour—Compte Moral rendu et dernier mot à mes chers amis, par Olympe de Gouges à la Convention Nationale et au Peuple sur une Dénonciation faite contre son Cuisine, aux Jacobins, par le Sieur Bourdon*, 24 pp. *Le Cri du Sage Par une Femme*, 8 pp. *Dialogue Allégorique entre la France et la Vérité, dédiée aux États Généraux*, 37 pp. *Lettre à Mgr. le Duc d'Orléans Prince du Sang*, signed *l'amie de tous les citoyens et du repos public.*

pathies were at first monarchical. She looked to the King to carry out a programme of social reform advocated in her pamphlets and inspired by her keen sympathy with the terrible sufferings of the people. By her proposal to solve the problem of unemployment through the establishment of national workshops, Olympe anticipated the Revolutionaries of 1848. Her object, she says, was to electrify humanity; and to this end she sermonised everybody, high and low, but chiefly high, the King, the Queen, the Prince de Condé, the Duc d'Orléans, the National Assembly, and Robespierre. Olympe, like most leading women of the Revolution, detested Robespierre. She held him responsible for the second attack on the Tuileries; and in order to wash off the blood-stains which had covered him ever since, she invited him to plunge with her into the Seine. "We would tie balls of lead to our feet and thus cast ourselves together into the flood," she added.

When the Princes had emigrated, Olympe had implored the King to appoint her to follow them and persuade them to return. With the Women's Procession on October the 6th, 1789, she had no sympathy whatever. It horrified her to see royalty thus led captive. The monarchical edifice, completed by Louis XIV., then seemed to her almost sacred. "Fourteen years work," she wrote, "have improved its excellent constitution. . . . It is madness to think of changing it. And yet they do think of doing so. What a time!"[1] It was not long, however, before Olympe herself became firmly persuaded that nothing could save the State but the destruction of this sacred constitution. The King's flight to Varennes suddenly made her a Republican.

After the humiliating return of the sovereign and his family to Paris, Olympe protested, and quite reasonably, against the retention of an institution which had forfeited the nation's respect. Nevertheless

[1] *Discours de l'Aveugle.*

when at length Monarchy was abolished and the Republic proclaimed, when Louis had ceased to be King, when he stood before the bar of the Assembly to answer for his life, Olympe's passionate pity went out to him. Then she performed the most quixotic and the most courageous action of her extraordinary career, she offered herself as Louis' defender, and in so doing doomed herself to the scaffold.[1] Already by her outspoken criticism of many acts of the revolutionary party she had made herself unpopular in clubs and societies, especially in the Jacobin Club. Now she was regarded as a traitor to the Revolution. The letter to the Convention, in which she made her proposal, is so characteristic through its inconsequence and contradictions, its *naïveté* and queer metaphors, its inflated vanity, its superb courage and, in spite of all, its strain of common sense, that we quote it almost in full.[2]

"CITIZEN PRESIDENT,—The universe fixes its eyes on the trial of the first and last of French kings. I hasten to pass on to the National Convention original letters written to me by *les sieurs* Brissac and Laporte. I add to them five hundred copies of my *Compte Rendu*.[3]

"Citizen President, a greater matter occupies me to-day: that of my country's honour. I offer myself, after the courageous Malesherbes, to be Louis' defender. Let not my sex be an objection: that heroism and liberty may be possessed by women the Revolution has shown by more than one example. But I am a frank and loyal Republican without blame and without reproach; no one doubts it, not even those who pretend to call in question my civic virtues. I may therefore undertake this case.

[1] See *post*, pp. 250-51.

[2] As cited by Lacour, op. cit., p. 57, who quotes it from a document in the Musée des Archives.

[3] *Compte Moral Rendu* reproaching the Government with not having perceived earlier the irreconcilability of the principles of monarchism and national sovereignty.

"I believe Louis guilty *as King*; but once shorn of this forbidden title, he ceases to be guilty in the eyes of the Republic. His ancestors had filled to overflowing the cup of the sufferings of France; unhappily the cup broke in his hands and all its fragments rebounded upon his head. I may add that, had it not been for his court's perversity, he might perhaps have been a virtuous king. It is enough to recall that he hated the great, that he succeeded in obliging them to pay their debts, that he alone of all our tyrants kept no courtesans, that his morals were primitive. He was weak; he was deceived; he deceived us; he deceived himself. In brief, this is the charge against him.

"Citizen President, I shall not here produce the reasons that I have to bring forward for his defence. I desire only to be permitted by the Convention and by Louis Capet to second an old man of more than fourscore years[1] in a painful function, which to me seems to demand all the strength and all the courage of a greener age. I should certainly never have entered the lists with such a defender had not the cruelty of the Sire Target,[2] as cruel as it was selfish, inflamed my heroism and excited my pity. I am ready to die now. One of my republican plays is about to be acted. If, at a moment it may be of personal triumph, I am deprived of life, and if laws continue after my death, my name will be blessed, and my assassins, when their eyes are opened, will weep tears over my grave. Louis Capet may suspect my zeal. Doubtless his infamous courtiers have not failed to paint me as a cannibal thirsting for blood: but how grand thus to undeceive an unhappy and defenceless man!

"With the permission of the National Convention I will state an opinion which seems to me worthy its close attention.

[1] Malesherbes.
[2] An eminent lawyer who had refused Louis' request that he would be his Counsel.

"Is Louis the Last more dangerous to the Republic than his brothers, than his son? His brothers are still in league with foreign powers, and are working for themselves alone. Louis Capet's son is innocent; and he will survive his father. May not pretenders fill centuries with faction and with strife? In history the English occupy a place very different from the Romans. In the eyes of posterity the English are dishonoured by the execution of Charles I.; the Romans are immortalised by the exile of Tarquin. But true Republicans always had nobler maxims than slaves. Beheading a king does not kill him. He lives long after his death; he is only really dead when he survives his fall. Here I conclude in order that the National Convention may make those reflections which arise from what I have said."

We all know that many subsequent historians have adopted Olympe's last argument against the execution of a King.

The Convention, after having heard this document read, passed on, without note or comment, to the next business. But the letter had aroused considerable opposition. A crowd of infuriated idlers gathered round the door, and as Olympe came out boldly into their midst, one of them seized her and handled her so roughly that her cap fell off, disclosing a bald head. "Who will give twenty-four sous for the head of Mme de Gouges?" he cried, whereupon Olympe with perfect serenity rejoined, "Friend, I bid thirty." The crowd laughed and Olympe's assailant relaxed his hold.

Determined to give her letter as much publicity as possible, Olympe had had it posted on the walls, with the added statement that no true Republican would vote for the death of the unhappy offender (*l'infortuné coupable*), whose greatest crime was to have been born at a time when philosophy was silently laying the foundation of the Republic.

Confronted by so incontrovertible an argument the Anti-Feminish newspaper, *Les Révolutions de Paris*, could only exclaim with a sneer: "What business is it of hers? Let her knit trousers for our brave *sans-culottes.*"

With Olympe's feminism, with her arrest and execution we shall deal in our last chapter.

Le journalisme, said the De Goncourts, using a metaphor which perhaps was less hackneyed in their day than in ours, sprang fully armed from the brains of the Revolution, *est sorti tout armé du cerveau de la Révolution.*

From the very beginning French newspapers took women into account. Women contributed to them, as we have seen in the case of Mme Roland. Several papers intended specially for women were published, edited, and in some cases printed by women. The most widely circulated of these was *La Véritable Amie de la Reine, ou Journal des Dames par une société de citoyennes.* Then there was *Le Bulletin* of Mme de Beaumont, and *L'Observateur Féminin*, which was soon succeeded by *L'Etoile du Matin ou les Petits Mots*, edited by Mme de Verte Allure, an ex-nun. There was a paper which recalls one with a similar title to-day, *Les Annales.* But *Les Annales* of the Revolution was devoted to education, and had as a sub-title, *Journal des Demoiselles.* It was edited by a Mme Mouret, who was said to be a descendant of La Fontaine. The Market had its paper, *La Gazette des Halles*, owned by women, and printed on la Place Maubert. Another woman's paper, this one edited by a man, was *Le Courrier de l'Hymen.* Like the masculine newspaper, *Bouche de Fer*, it invited its readers to air their grievances in its columns; women especially were urged to give expression to any complaints they might have against the National Assembly or even against their own husbands. The paper also served as a matrimonial agency. It

announced, for instance, that an American, who had the honour to sit in the National Assembly, or its American equivalent, would like to share his fortune with a young *citoyenne* of Paris, even if she brought him as her dowry nothing but a good education, a charming character, and a pleasing countenance. Although he was a member of the Legislative Body this American did not require his wife to hold pronounced opinions as to political parties. He would prefer her to be neither on the right nor the left, but in *le juste milieu*. Unfortunately such announcements were too few, and, as the newspaper depended on them, it collapsed after the appearance of forty-five numbers.

Women editors did not confine themselves to women's papers. At Arras the *citoyenne* Marchaud edited *Le Journal du Pas de Calais*. At Paris Mme Robert helped her husband in the editorship of the chief organ of the Republican party, *Le Mercure National*.

Louise de Kéralio, afterwards Mme Robert,[1] was the most eminent and capable of the revolutionary women journalists.

Born in Paris in 1758, Louise was the daughter of a Breton knight, le Chevalier Guynement de Kéralio, Professor at l'Ecole Militaire, member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, and editor of *Le Journal des Savants*. Her mother, too, was a writer; and in this literary atmosphere Louise at an early age began to earn her living by her pen: she translated English books; she wrote novels and historical works, *Les Crimes des Reines de France, depuis le Commencement de la Monarchie à Marie Antoinette* and a history of Queen Elizabeth of England, which it took her some years to complete. These books won her the honour of admission to a literary academy, that of Arras, which was presided over by none other

[1] See *ante*, p. 84.

than Maximilien Robespierre. In her reception speech on the study of history Mlle de Kéralio displayed those oratorical gifts which later were to win her renown in the Jacobin and Cordelier Clubs. Robespierre in his reply made the newly elected Academician his admirer for life by justifying the admission of women into literary societies. To that speech of his Robespierre was indebted for the support he received later from *Le Mercure National*, which, as we have said, Louise edited, in collaboration with her husband, François Robert. Robert, whom Louise married in 1791, was a lawyer of Liège. The *Mercure* was the organ of the Republican party, which came into existence in this year, and which is said to have been founded in Mme Robert's salon in Paris. This young Republican was also a frequent visitor in another Republican salon, that of Lucile Desmoulins in La Rue de l'Odéon.[1]

It was in the year of the Roberts' marriage that the petition to the Constituent Assembly for the King's deposition was drawn up and presented for signature to the crowds gathered on the Champ de Mars for the Feast of the Federation on July the 17th. Though this petition was in Robert's handwriting, the staccato, direct, emphatic style, says Michelet, was much more like that of the lively Bretoness, Mme Robert, than of her rather heavy Flemish husband.

While most of the other Republican leaders absented themselves from the Champ de Mars on that critical day, the Roberts were there, standing together on the steps of the altar of *la patrie*, collecting signatures to the petition, when Bailly and Lafayette, in obedience to the orders of the Monarchist National Assembly, began to fire on the crowd. The altar steps were strewn with corpses. The Roberts narrowly escaped with their lives. That evening all the members of the little Republican party, whether

[1] See *post*, p. 213.

they had been present on the Champ de Mars or not, felt themselves in danger. Robespierre did not return to his lodging that night, but accepted for the first time the hospitality of one Duplay, a master cabinet-maker, in the Rue St. Honoré, with whom he continued to lodge, except for one brief interval,[1] for the remainder of his days. The Roberts, too, feared to go home. But they were less fortunate than Robespierre: they were not offered, they had to crave shelter, and it was granted them unwillingly, as it transpired later, by the Rolands, who were then, as we have seen,[2] lodging in the Hôtel Britannique, Rue Guénégaud. The Rolands, not having been present on the Champ de Mars, were not in danger.

Mme Roland describes the incident in her Memoirs, written in prison two years after the event. The caustic tone of her narrative and her dislike of the Roberts[3] may be explained by the fact that Robert had worried Roland when he became Minister of the Interior to give him a place in the Government. Mme Roland makes much of the trouble and the danger of entertaining these unwelcome guests. She complains that she had to have beds put up in her sitting-room for the two men, while she took Mme Robert into her own room. The next morning the Roberts were in no hurry to depart, and when they did go, it was only to return, in showy clothes, to lunch, and afterwards to disport themselves on the balcony, making loud remarks on the passers-by. From that day until Roland became Minister his wife accuses her guests of having given no sign of gratitude or of life. Then by clamouring for some high official post for Robert—that of Ambassador at Constantinople was mentioned—they rendered themselves a nuisance to the whole Government. It was unfortunate for the

[1] See *ante*, p. 152. [2] *Ante*, p. 113.

[3] See Aulard, *Histoire Politique de la Révolution Française*, p. 109, *A la propagande républicaine de Mme Robert s'oppose victorieusement l'influence opportuniste . . . de Mme Roland, républicaine par instinct, monarchiste par raison.*

Rolands that while they turned a deaf ear to Robert's request, it was granted by the Rolands' worst enemy, by Danton, who made Robert his secretary. He was already a Member of the National Convention. The Roberts were probably not in the least heroic. They may very likely have been just the type of adventurers with whom the sublime Mme Roland would have had least sympathy. We are not surprised to find, therefore, that while their hosts of 1791 perished, the Roberts succeeded in surviving the Revolution. In 1815, Robert was banished from France. He went to Brussels—presumably taking his wife with him—and there when we last hear of him he was carrying on the business of a wine merchant.

Throughout the Revolution, we find women printing as well as editing and contributing to newspapers. One woman at least, Mme Colombe, was the owner of a well-known printing press. A movement was started to train women as printers. The citizen Deltufo established a school for women-printers. In 1794, after it had been in existence for some time, he and his pupils presented a petition[1] to the National Convention, asking the Assembly to give it work and to grant it an annual subsidy. To enforce his demands Deltufo pleaded that if women became compositors men would be set free to practise the arts of war and agriculture where they were badly needed. All he required of his pupils was to know how to read and write. The Assembly authorised the School to call itself *Imprimerie des Femmes sous les auspices de la Convention Nationale*, and sent a citizen called Grégoire to inspect the school. His report was highly satisfactory, and the Inspector was told to confer with le Comité de Salut Public. The result of the conference does not appear.

[1] *Pétition à la Convention Nationale pour l'Ecole Typographique des Femmes*, 1794, published by Alkan, a former printer (price 75c.), in 1862, when objection was taken to certain well-known printers like Didot employing compositresses.

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN AT ARMS

Quoique j'soyons une femme, oh! j'sentions dans not' cœur
Que je pouvions, comme un homme, avoir tantant d'valeur,
Quand d'sous le brav' La Fayette, on n'est sur des lauriers
Hommes, femmes, enfants, tous veuleut être guerriers! [1]
—La Gazette des Halles [2]

A LEADING Frenchwoman of to-day, when she was asked whether she were a Feminist, i.e., whether she desired the recognition of equal rights and equal duties between men and women, replied, "As to rights, yes; as to duties, take care, lest this should imply military service, lest instead of giving life, women should take it."[3] The women of the Revolution, far from being troubled by any such scruples, demanded the right to take life in the service of the cause to which they were devoted.

When Mme Roland's friend Lanthenas welcomed Théroigne to the Jacobin Club[4] and praised passive resistance in women, not many of his feminine hearers can have agreed with him, and certainly not she whom they had met to honour, for Théroigne only a few minutes before had been advocating war as the best way to establish the Revolution. Mme Roland,

[1] "Although I be a woman, oh! I feel in my heart that I could be as brave as a man. When under the brave Lafayette we be covered with laurels, then, men, children, all of us, want to be soldiers."—The Market Women's War-Song.

[2] See *ante*, p. 171.

[3] The reply of Camille Bruno to an inquiry instituted by the French newspaper *La Française*. See *La Française*, 11th February, 1922.

[4] *Ante*, p. 86.

though she would have disapproved of women fighting, was a militarist who did not scruple to advocate even civil war. Olympe de Gouges went further and claimed women's right to wield the sword. She regretted that when women had been taught the art of kindling war, that of waging war had been denied them.[1]

Olympe, as early as 1791, announced her intention of organising a woman's legion. The next year she attended the Fête of the Federation at the head of a body of women all fully armed, and she looked for all the world like a trumpet-major, said a contemporary newspaper. But neither she nor her women legionaries, as far as we know, ever made use of their weapons; though once when an editor presumed to ridicule one of her pamphlets, Olympe summoned him to fight her in a duel with pistols. "I will give you the advantage of firing first," she said, "for I am persuaded that your trembling will make you miss me." But this duel, like many another piece of revolutionary braggadocio, never came to pass. In one of her pamphlets[2] Olympe proposed that women should form themselves into a body-guard to protect the Queen. Later women did form a body-guard to protect Robespierre, and this at a time when he was being threatened by members of their own sex, one of whom, the Royalist Cécile Renault, was accused of having tried to assassinate him.

One of the first acts of the Women's Republican Revolutionary Club, on the 12th of May, 1793, was to send a deputation to the Jacobins to demand the arming of all patriotic women between the ages of eighteen and fifty, who should be formed into a regiment to fight

[1] Olympe was by no means the first to make this demand for Frenchwomen. Everyone knows that from Joan of Arc onwards, France had not been without Amazons. In 1673, some unknown writer, calling himself le Seigneur P., had published a book, *De l'Egalité des deux sexes*, maintaining woman's ability to cultivate military arts with success.

[2] *Sera-t-il Roi? ou ne le sera-t-il pas?*

against the Royalists in La Vendée.[1] Pauline Léon, who, as we have seen,[2] was the Club's first president, and Théroigne de Méricourt, both attempted to form regiments of women.

Théroigne had returned from her Austrian dungeon all on fire with military ardour. Barely had she received her ovation from the Jacobins[3] than she turned her attention to the training of her sex in military prowess. Her Faubourg St. Antoine Club was to have been a Club of Armed Women. On the 25th of March, at the Club des Minimes in the St. Antoine quarter, Théroigne made one of her eloquent speeches. It was a call to arms. "Open a list of Amazons," she cried, "come and drill three times a week on the Champs Elysées." The women responded in considerable numbers. They assembled on the Place Louis XIII, where Théroigne presented them with a banner. The anti-revolutionary papers did not fail to make fun of all this. One of them, *Le Petit Gautier*, said that in the burning heat of her military fervour Théroigne's false moustache, becoming unstuck, had fallen off and been lost.

Before the end of the month a petition signed by more than three hundred women was presented to the Legislative Assembly.

"Legislators," it began, "women patriots present themselves before you to claim the right of every individual to provide for the defence of his life and liberty.

"Everything seems to augur a violent and imminent shock. Our fathers, husbands and brothers may perhaps fall victims to our enemies' fury. Are we to be denied the satisfaction of avenging them or of dying by their sides?".

After a long harangue, in which the women assured

[1] There, many women were fighting, but, as they were on the Royalist side, they do not enter these pages.
[2] *Ante*, p. 102.
[3] *Ante*, pp. 86-87.

their hearers that their object was not to neglect domestic duties but merely to place themselves in a position to defend their homes should the need arise, the petitioners went on to make specific demands :

(1) Permission to provide themselves with pikes, pistols, swords, and even guns.

(2) To meet for drill on the Champ de la Fédération or some other suitable place on Sundays and holidays and to nominate former French guards as their officers.

Besides this petition of the three hundred, the Assembly, the Commune, and the Clubs were constantly receiving offers of military service from individual women. These offers, like that made by Claire Lacombe when she first arrived in Paris, in July, 1792, were generally received with applause. But on one occasion they met with a different kind of reception. The Legislators, to translate their rejoinder very roughly, practically replied : " But why all this fuss? Why do you not enter the army if you want to? There are no laws to prevent you doing so." And indeed those women who were really in earnest in their desire to fight, quickly went about their business, and without any petitioning of the Assembly, as we shall see later, they disguised themselves as men and entered the army, where two of them at least did valiant service. There they fought like men with masculine weapons. They scorned those fantastic feminine pikes, which, with their wooden handles carved to represent a laurel branch bearing a cap of liberty, may still be seen in the Carnavalet Museum.

The women who in Paris and the Provinces formed themselves into regiments seem to have been mainly concerned with designing banners and elaborate uniforms, white coats with red ornaments, blue hats with white feathers and broad tricolour belts. Yet after all this ostentation, not one of these feminine regiments ever came under fire.

One woman, Manette Dupont,[1] told the Convention that she had nine hundred citizenesses disguised as men ready to set out to fight the tyrants of the nation on the frontier, and on their behalf she petitioned the Convention to organise a corps of ten thousand women and girls in the department of Paris, also to command shop-keepers to substitute women for men assistants. Manette's regiment was to bear the name "Fernig" after two sisters who were then actually serving at the front. "You have allowed les demoiselles Fernig to serve in Dumouriez's army, consequently you cannot refuse us," Manette pleaded.

The Convention had indeed not only recognised as soldiers, but had rewarded the valour of these enterprising demoiselles Fernig. It had presented them with two war-horses, richly caparisoned; it had decreed that the Fernigs deserved well of their country; and it had rebuilt at the Government's expense their birthplace at Mortagne, near Valenciennes, which had been burnt to the ground by Austrian soldiers. But then the Fernig girls had gone quietly to work, without any blast of trumpets and without asking permission of any one, not even of their own father.[2]

These remarkable maidens were the daughters of Louis Joseph de Fernig, an Alsatian nobleman, born on the 3rd of October, 1735. He served with distinction in the Seven Years' War from 1755-62, and then renounced the army for literature. The friend of Voltaire, he spent a year with the philosopher at Ferney. He married a woman of Hainault of good family and had by her five children: a son, Jean Louis Joseph, who became a soldier; two daughters, Aimée and Louise, who married young; and two younger

[1] Villiers, *Histoire des Clubs de Femmes et des Légions d'Amazones*, p. 85.

[2] The chief authorities for the following story are: Mme de Genlis' *Mémoires* (ed. 1825-26), pp. 242-43; Honoré Bonhomme, *Correspondence de Mlle de Fernig* (Firmin Didot, 1873), cited by Taine, *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine* (Hachette, 1907), vol. VIII, p. 150.

daughters, Félicité and Théophile, with whom we are now concerned. Félicité was born in 1776 and Théophile in 1779. Their mother died soon after Théophile's birth.

On the outbreak of the Revolution, M. de Fernig returned to his old occupation and became commander of the national guard of the Valenciennes district. In that frontier region the inhabitants and their property were daily exposed to the ravages of war. Félicité and her sister, hardy lasses, renowned throughout the country-side as excellent horse-women and first-rate shots, felt their martial ardour inflamed as they heard their father, returning from his military expeditions, tell of the ravages committed by the Austrians. It seems to have been the news of the French defeat at Longwy in September, 1792, that finally decided the youthful Mesdemoiselles Fernig to don the military clothes which their brother, serving in another part of France, had left behind him, and with the connivance of some of their friends, officers in the army, to join their father's company without his knowledge. Their disguise was apparently so complete that De Fernig did not even recognise his own daughters when in one engagement they intervened to save his life. How long he would have remained in ignorance it is impossible to say. But one day General Beurnonville, reviewing De Fernig's company, espied two soldiers who seemed particularly anxious to escape his notice. This intrigued him. He called them out and questioned them. Now at length their disguise failed them; and their shrill voices betrayed their sex. What the Commander felt when the discovery was made is unknown. But he cannot have been displeased with his daughters' heroism, for he allowed them to remain in the army. Beurnonville reported his discovery to his Commander-in-Chief, Dumouriez, who made them his aides-de-camp and bestowed such commissions on their father and brother as kept all the Fernigs together. *Elles savent bien tuer leur*

homme, Beurnonville reported to the Convention. Dumouriez described them to Mme de Genlis as "audacious and fearsome soldiers."

They became the object of the respect and admiration of the whole army; and until April, 1793, fought in all Dumouriez's battles—Valmy, Jemappes, Anderlecht and Neerwinden. The General would point them out to his soldiers as a happy augury of victory. According to Mme de Genlis, he loved to tell of the courage they displayed on more than one occasion: how Félicité was with the Duc de Chartres (afterwards Louis Philippe) during his most perilous enterprises; how Théophile, in an engagement near Brussels, when an enemy officer summoned her to surrender, with one pistol shot stretched him at her feet; how at Jemappes, when, with a handful of horsemen, she was attacking a Hungarian battalion, with her own hand she took prisoner and disarmed the most formidable of the grenadiers; he was "so tall that even on foot," says Mme de Genlis, "he towered over his captor on her horse." Incredible! Though both sisters were below the average height. But Dumouriez's favourite story was of Théophile's capture of a huge Austrian whom she led to the Commander-in-Chief, saying in her girlish treble, "General, here is a prisoner I have brought you." The piping voice staggered the Austrian, who was furious to find that he had surrendered to a girl.

When Dumouriez went over to the enemy, the devotion of the Fernig family to the General prompted them to follow him. Neither the Convention nor the Directory ever forgave them for this: they were considered as *émigrés* for the rest of their lives.

The Convention visited the offences of two women in particular on women in general: on May 30th, 1793, it passed a decree banishing from camps and cantonments all women useless to the army, i.e., all who were not authorised to be there as washerwomen and *vivandières*. Women actually fighting

were to be forbidden military service and given a passport and five sous a league to return to their homes.[1]

Though the Fernigs occasionally visited Paris and their native village of Mortagne, they were not allowed to reside in either place. The utmost the Directory Government would do for them was to offer them domicile in the Colonies, and that they refused.

Félicité married a Belgian General and settled at Brussels. Théophile did not marry. She was the most original as well as the best looking of the two.

Mme de Genlis met her during her wanderings, while she was staying at Sielk in Holland, with a M. de Valence, to whom Théophile was at that time secretary. She was then twenty-one and, says Mme de Genlis, "had the prettiest and most modest face and tiny delicate white hands. She wrote a very fine hand and knew how to spell"—evidently a rare accomplishment in those days. Mme de Genlis was charmed with her sweetness and equanimity, and one day she saw for herself evidence of that unflinching courage of which she had so often heard from her friend, Dumouriez. One morning, when the men with their valets had gone out hunting, the cook rushed into the salon terrified, saying that a robber was in the kitchen doing untold damage. Straightway the sweet and gentle Théophile "assumed a warlike air and seized a walking-stick" which happened to be in a corner of the room. Thus armed the heroine of Jemappes rushed into the kitchen, where the thief threw himself upon her. But Théophile and the walking-stick soon reduced the burglar to beg for mercy, which he received; and then being released he fled from the house. "Mlle Fernig returned to us," says Mme de Genlis, "as calm and natural as if she had just performed the most ordinary action. For the rest of the day I could not help looking at those pretty little hands, which could be so brave and strong in moments of danger."

[1] Lacour, op. cit., p. 327.

Théophile's letters from Amsterdam and elsewhere to a cousin, an officer in Bonaparte's army, show her to have been lively, sensible, and something of a Feminist. "Men," she writes, "have not a shade of that delicacy of feeling of which women are capable." Then quoting, so she says, her father's friend, Voltaire, she tells her cousin that "women are never false save when men are tyrants."

This ex-Amazon was naturally an ardent admirer of the greatest of generals. To her cousin, then at Venice, she writes from Amsterdam somewhat timidly, wondering whether she dare ask him to do something for her that she desires with all her heart. Then, taking courage, she says: "I will risk it. You have seen the hero, Bonaparte. Well, this is what I want you to do, to send me in your next letter a portrait of him which is a true likeness. Here we have nothing but caricatures which are ridiculous."

Although these letters reveal nothing more than a purely platonic and cousinly friendship, one wonders whether, on Théophile's part at least, there may not have been a warmer sentiment. When a wealthy husband is found for Félicité, one is also offered to the younger sister. But, writes Théophile to her cousin, "I feel that the heart alone should be master, that the heart alone should be consulted in so fundamental a matter, and my heart has nothing to say in favour of this suitor." At the same time she is her cousin's confidante. He tells her of his love affairs. When, in the intervals between his campaigns, he comes to Holland, they meet generally, but not always. In one letter Théophile writes, *vous m'avez toute boulversée*, why and how does not appear. In January, 1803, the correspondence ceases, at any rate that part of it that has been preserved and published. In 1818, Théophile died at Brussels, where she was buried.

Other women besides the Fernigs, without any bravado, quietly took up their swords and fought. At

Jemappes there were at least two other Amazons, Catherine Pochelat and Dulière, both artillery women.

At Lille, a widow, Mary Guillot, was gunneress; and when she came to Paris the Jacobin Club invited her to sit on the President's right hand.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARLOTTE CORDAY

" Hearts must not sink at seeing Law lie dead;
No, Corday, no;
Else Justice had not crown'd in heaven thy head
Profaned below.

Three women France hath borne, each greater far
Than all her men.
And greater many were than any are
At sword or pen—

Corneille, the first among Gaul's rhymer race
Whose soul was free,
Descends from his high station, proud to trace
His line in thee."

—*W. S. Landor.*

UNLIKE many of the women in the last chapter, Charlotte Corday, the most self-possessed, the most determined and the most dignified of all revolutionary armed women kept her own counsel all too well. For that reason she needlessly sacrificed her life for her country, to which, had she lived, she might have rendered valuable service. Had they only known her intention, said Charlotte's fellow-politicians, they could have directed her knife to a much more profitable quarter than the heart of Marat, whom disease had already condemned to an imminent death.

" The angel of assassination," as Lamartine calls Charlotte Corday, appeals to many as one of the most striking examples of the complete heroine. It seems appropriate, therefore, that she should number among

her direct ancestors that most heroic of tragic dramatists, Pierre Corneille.[1]

Charlotte was born during that seventh decade of the eighteenth century which saw the birth of nearly all the Revolution heroes and heroines.

At Ronceray, in a picturesque Norman farmhouse on the 27th of July, 1768, Marie Charlotte Jacqueline de Corday gave birth to her fifth child, her third daughter, a second Marie Charlotte, to be known among her own people and in history as Charlotte. Her family belonged to *la petite noblesse*. Her parents were what we should call country gentry, living on their own land.

Her father, Jacques François de Corday, knight and seigneur d'Armont, brought up his children in habits of the strictest economy. To this youthful training are due, no doubt, the orderliness and attention to detail which all the records of Charlotte's life reveal and which are seldom found in one of her idealist temperament.

She was a pretty child, with glorious golden hair, a dazzling complexion and good features. Dreamy and silent, she loved to wander alone through the woods and fields which surrounded her home. She was still a child when her father's resources grew so restricted that he was glad to farm out his children with more prosperous relatives. A priest uncle, a worthy and cultured person, highly respected in the neighbourhood, received Charlotte and taught her to read in a

[1] Pierre Corneille
|
Marie Corneille
|
Françoise de Farcy
|
Adrien de Corday
|
S. F. de Corday d'Armont
|
Charlotte

See De France, *Charlotte Corday*, p. 21. Michelet and Louis Blanc represented her as Corneille's great-grandniece.

precious heirloom, a valuable edition of her illustrious ancestor's plays. Thus early did Charlotte drink of that well of patriotic heroism which was to remain the source of all her inspiration. At the age of twelve Charlotte lost her mother, who died in giving birth to her sixth child. And for a while the Cordays lived at Caen, while the seigneur d'Armont was conducting with his wife's relatives one of those numerous law-suits in which *la petite noblesse* seems to have delighted. The law-suit was probably successful, seeing that Charlotte, when she grew up, was possessed of some small fortune, which enabled her to live independently away from home. *Je vis de mes revenues*, she told her judges.

While her father was at Caen, he put Charlotte and her sister to school in the famous Saint Trinity convent of the town. It was a highly aristocratic institution, receiving as a rule no more than five noble maidens of reduced circumstances, whom the King himself nominated. And it was only by means of high and powerful influence that Charlotte and her sister were admitted. There Charlotte spent some years and rose to occupy a position of authority in the management of the convent. There she doubtless would have continued, possibly becoming superior, or at any rate canoness, had she and her companions not been driven out, when in 1790 the National Assembly decreed the suppression of all convents.

Charlotte then joined her father and sisters in the country. With her determined will and pronounced opinions, she could not have found it easy to settle down in family life. While her father and brothers were Royalists and Catholics, Charlotte was sceptical and Republican. "I was a Republican before the Revolution," she said to her judges.

Always of a studious and thoughtful disposition, like Mme Roland, she had spent her girlhood in company with the heroes of Greece and Rome and in drinking deep of eighteenth century philosophy. Plutarch's

Lives was her breviary; and with passionate interest she was already following all the events of the Revolution.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find that after a few months in the family circle, she left it and returned to Caen. There she lived with an aged relative, Mme de Bretteville, in a set of rooms in a dilapidated old house, known as *le Grand Manoir*, occupying the back of a courtyard in the centre of the city. That by this time Charlotte had grown into a beautiful girl there is no doubt. The exact colour of her hair, whether her eyes were blue or grey, whether she was tall or below the average height has been hotly contended. Perhaps the description in her passport may be taken as the surest evidence, though it is by no means infallible, as the recent war has proved. According to this document, Charlotte's hair was chestnut brown, her eyes grey, and her height five feet one.[1] As to her manner, there is no diversity of opinion : all agree that she was graceful and dignified, still pensive, talking little in society, and on the rare occasions when she took part in conversation, startling her companions by her opinions. Thus at a family dinner-party in honour of Charlotte's brother and a friend, whom it was hoped she would marry, both on the eve of starting to join the *émigré* army, the King's health was proposed. Charlotte refused to drink it. "What!" exclaimed one of the guests, "you refuse to drink the health of our King, who is so good and virtuous?" "I believe him to be virtuous," she replied, "but a weak King cannot be good; for he is incapable of preventing his people's misfortunes." But Charlotte's Republicanism, like that of Olympe de Gouges, did not prevent her deploring the King's execution. She was by this time, as we have said, intensely interested in the important events going forward, a diligent newspaper reader, and a careful

[1] Reproduced by Lenôtre, *Paris Revolutionnaire*, p. 227. The authenticity of the existing portraits of her is also disputed.

student of the hundreds of pamphlets for and against the Revolution that the Press was constantly pouring forth.[1] Her sympathies were with the party of La Gironde, especially after the Girondist members of the Convention who had been proscribed on the 31st of May, 1793, had made Charlotte's city of Caen the centre of the insurrection they were trying to raise against the Jacobin Government. Buzot, Pétion, Louvet, Barbaroux and other Girondins were appealing to the people of Normandy to march on Paris and there to overthrow the dictatorship of the Convention. Charlotte attended all their meetings. "Her silent enthusiasm enhanced her beauty," wrote one who saw her there. She wept to hear the Girondins tell of the anarchy prevailing throughout her beloved France. Charlotte's was a practical nature. No sooner had she realised the existence of an evil than her mind flew to devise remedies. It seemed then that one man, Marat, the so-called People's Friend, was in reality the people's enemy and cause of all their suffering. Marat was one of the most prolific journalists and pamphleteers of the day. With his turbulent brain goaded to fury by the perpetual irritation of an agonising skin disease, in page after page, each more vehement than the last, he clamoured for blood and for more blood. All these writings Charlotte read until Marat became an obsession, a veritable Antichrist. If only his pen could cease writing, his brain cease devising horrors, then her poor country might at length find peace. This was Charlotte's one idea. She never paused to ask whether some other tyrant might not take Marat's place. She knew no conflict of emotions such as her ancestor, the Great Corneille, loved to portray. No sooner had she realised that Marat was a "ferocious beast about to devour France with the fire of civil war" than she determined to destroy him. Then swiftly, inevitably, she sped towards her tragic goal.

[1] She had read five hundred of them she told her judges. Wallon, *Histoire du Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Paris*, vol. I, p. 203.

The idea first occurred to her, she told her judges, on the 31st of May, 1793. Only seven short weeks elapsed before the deed was done.

During that brief space Charlotte was busy making arrangements for her journey to Paris. There was a passport to be procured on the pretext of presenting a petition to the Convention on behalf of a friend, an *émigrée* who was in great poverty in Switzerland. Then there were introductions to people in Paris who might be useful. These she obtained from the Girondist leaders. Barbaroux, especially, she often saw. She talked with him about public affairs; and he gave her a letter to the Deputy Duperret. After Charlotte's death, Barbaroux said that on her last visit something in her voice filled him with a vague foreboding he could not understand. Afterwards he wished he had known her design; "for," he said, "if we (the Girondins) had been capable of a crime by such a hand it was not Marat we should have pointed out for vengeance." But Charlotte never by word or look or any sign hinted at the project she had in mind. The poet, André Chénier, never wrote truer lines than these dedicated to Charlotte:

Sous les dehors d'une allégresse aimable
Dans ses détours profonds ton âme impénétrable
Avait tenu cachés les destins du pervers.[1]

It is not surprising that during those weeks Mme de Bretteville found Charlotte more than usually preoccupied. Once she discovered her in tears. "I weep," said Charlotte, "over my country's misfortunes, over those of my family and over yours; for while Marat lives no one can be sure of life for even a day." There is a legend that one morning when Mme de Bretteville went into Charlotte's room to awaken her, she found on her bed an ancient Bible open at the Book of Judith, and at a page on which was the verse: "Judith went forth from the city, adorned with

[1] "Beneath an outward aspect of amiable cheerfulness did your impenetrable soul keep the criminal's destiny concealed in its innermost labyrinth."

a marvellous beauty, which the Lord had bestowed on her to deliver Israel."[1]

Before finally leaving Caen for Paris, Charlotte went into the country to bid her father and sisters farewell. She told them she was about to emigrate to England, where she had friends. Then, returning to Caen, she told Mme de Bretteville that she was going on a sketching expedition into the country.

So, on the 9th of July she set out, carrying a small bundle of clothes, a copy of Plutarch's *Lives* and a large sheet of drawing-paper. The last she gave to a little boy, the son of one of the tenants of the house, whom she met at the foot of the staircase. "Here, Robert," she said, "take this. It is for you. Be a good boy, and kiss me. You will never see me again." As the child kissed her, he felt a tear upon his cheek. In the Paris diligence, Charlotte's beauty so bewitched a fellow-traveller that he inquired her name and the address of her family in order that he might ask her hand in marriage. She, seized with the grim irony of the situation, promised to tell him later. It was noon on Thursday, the 11th of July, when the Caen diligence rumbled into Paris. Charlotte engaged a room at the Hôtel de la Providence, 17 Rue des Vieux Augustins. Worn out with her journey, she went to bed at five o'clock and slept soundly until the next day, Friday, when she rose betimes and went to Duperret's house, hoping to see him, and to present her letter of introduction from Barbaroux. But Duperret, she was told, was at the Convention and would not be home until evening. Charlotte returned to her hotel and passed the rest of the day in reading and meditation until six o'clock, when she returned to Duperret's. He was at dinner. But he left the table to come and talk to Charlotte in the salon. He promised to take her the next day to see Garat, the Minister of the Interior, to whom she wished to speak about her friend

[1] Revolutionaries who were Anti-Maratists liked to compare Charlotte with this heroine of the Apocrypha.

in Switzerland. Charlotte advised Duperret to flee from Paris to Caen before the next night. Her manner as well as her words were mysterious, said the Deputy afterwards. That very Friday evening, the possessions of Duperret, who was known to be in sympathy with the proscribed Girondins, were placed under the Government's seal.[1] Nevertheless, early the next morning, Duperret kept his promise to Charlotte and took her to Garat's. They failed to see him, however, and Duperret advised Charlotte to abandon her intervention on her friend's behalf, seeing that she had no written authority to act for her. The Deputy took Charlotte to her hotel and left her there. Soon afterwards she went out to the Palais Royal. There she purchased not a dagger, as some have said, but an ordinary table knife, for which she paid three francs. Concealing it beneath her kerchief, she sat down for a while on a stone bench in one of the colonnades.

Charlotte's design had been to slay Marat in the Convention. Afterwards she fully expected to be set upon and killed by the mob. Thus she would die unknown, unrecognised, leaving no record to shame her family.

Since arriving in Paris, however, she had heard that Marat was now too ill to go to the Convention or even to leave his house. She must make some other plan, therefore, and thus, much against her will, she was compelled to resort to deception. So she brought herself to address a note to the man she hated, offering to give him news of the Caen insurrection. As to when and how this note was delivered historians differ: some[2] say Charlotte posted it and that it did not reach Marat until the evening, shortly before Charlotte's final and fatal visit to his house; others[3] that she delivered it herself. There seems to be no doubt that she went at least twice, once in the morning and again in the evening, to Marat's house, No. 20 Rue des

[1] See *ante*, p. 121.
[2] Alfred Bougeart for example, *Vie de Marat*, vol. II, p. 263.
[3] Among them, Lenôtre, *Paris Révolutionnaire*, p. 211.

Cordeliers, now Rue de l'Ecole de Médicine. It is equally certain that the first time she failed to gain admission. The interval or intervals between these calls she spent at her hotel writing an appeal to posterity and a second letter to Marat intended to be a final appeal and imploring him to see her on the ground that she was unfortunate,[1] a sufferer in the cause of liberty. She also changed her frock. In the morning she had worn brown, in the evening her dress was pure white or, according to some witnesses, of a spotted material. At any rate, she dressed with great care; and, about seven o'clock, set out again to drive to the Rue des Cordeliers. Having arrived there, Charlotte stopped her coach on the opposite side of the street. Again the concierge refused her admission.

Marat, so diseased that after four years of suffering he said he would give all the dignities and honours in the world for a few days of health,[2] lived in perpetual dread of assassination. Though there was constant coming and going in the house of the editor and proprietor of *l'Ami du Peuple,* none but assured friends or denouncers strongly recommended were actually admitted to the editor's presence. Charlotte this time refused to accept the dismissal of the concierge. Marat's mistress, Simonne Evrard,[3] came to the door, and, guessing Charlotte to be the writer of the letter Marat had just received, she went to ask him whether he would receive the visitor. He consented, and Simonne showed Charlotte through an ante-chamber into Marat's study, which was also his bath-room. There Simonne withdrew, taking care to leave the door partly open, so that she might hear the slightest sound.

The room, in which Charlotte now found herself, was small and dimly lighted. Its most striking article of furniture was the slipper-bath, in which the

[1] This letter, according to Wallon, *Histoire du Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Paris,* vol. I, p. 193, was found in her possession when she was searched after the assassination.

[2] Cabanis, *Marat Inconnu,* p. 355.

[3] See *post,* pp. 220-21.

wretched Marat spent his days and nights. Only his head, shoulders, the upper part of his chest and his right arm were visible. As on the last time we saw him in Mme Tallien's salon,[1] a dirty scarf was tied round his matted hair, accentuating the receding forehead, protruding eyes, prominent cheek-bones and vast sneering mouth. Only in this posture, with the greater part of his body bathed in water, could Marat endure his miserable existence. Across the bath was placed a plank, which served as a writing-table.[2] It was covered with papers, open letters and half-written articles. Beside the bath on a large block of oak stood a leaden inkstand. When Charlotte entered, Marat was holding his pen suspended over a half written page, a letter he was writing to the Convention demanding the proscription of the last Bourbons who remained in France. He asked Charlotte about the state of Normandy, inquired the names of the Girondist deputies who had fled to Caen, and, when she gave them, exclaimed: "Well, before they are a week older they shall have the guillotine." At these words Charlotte drew the knife she had bought that morning from her kerchief, and with unerring aim plunged it up to the handle into Marat's heart, then withdrew it. Death was almost instantaneous. Marat had only time to cry to Simonne for help. Simonne rushed in. She found the printers' messenger and the cook wrestling with Charlotte, who had been thrown to the ground. Simonne vainly endeavoured to stay the tide of blood streaming from Marat's heart with her hand. A surgeon dentist who lived in the house bandaged the wound, took Marat from the bath and put him on his bed; but his pulse had already ceased to beat.[3]

[1] *Ante*, p. 57.

[2] In the picture of the bath given by M. Armand Dayot, *La Révolution Française* (Flammarion), p. 206, this plank is naturally not represented. But the oaken block stands beside the bath.

[3] The above account, given by Wallon, *ibid*, has many variants. Charlotte's own story told to her judges was not consistent in every detail.

The grief of Simonne and of her sister Catherine, who in a few minutes was in the room, alone among the terrible incidents that followed the assassination threatened to deprive Charlotte of her self-possession. Hitherto she had thought of Marat as a savage monster hardly human. "I killed one to save a thousand," she said. Now Simonne's and Catherine's tears revealed her victim as a fellow-creature, a man passionately loved by women.

But she had barely time to reflect before the little room was full: the tidings of the murder of Marat quickly ran through the district; neighbours flocked in; and soon they were followed by police officers and members of le Comité de Sûreté Générale. The latter, there, in the ante-chamber, while in the next room Marat's corpse was being laid out and preparations for its embalmment were being made, began Charlotte's cross-examination. Her interrogators made every effort to elicit from the accused something to show that she had acted as an agent of the persecuted Girondins. But even in that grim and horrible situation Charlotte kept her wits about her. One of her interrogators[1] had the effrontery to put his hand behind her fichu, expecting, he said, to find some paper to incriminate the Girondins. Charlotte's hands were bound. She could not defend herself with them, but with her body she repulsed the aggressor so forcibly that he fell back and at the same time the fastenings of her bodice gave way. The other members of the Committee, horrified by their colleague's brutality, caused her hands to be set free so that she might readjust her frock. They also allowed her to put gloves on her hands beneath the chains. This terrible interrogation lasted until two o'clock on Sunday morning. Only then was it decided to convey the accused to the Abbaye Prison.

Crowds still surrounded the house, crying for vengeance on the assassin of the People's Friend. As

[1] Wallon and others say it was Chabot.

the door opened and Charlotte appeared, the mob rushed forward with so fierce a cry of terror that for the first and only time Charlotte's courage entirely forsook her, and she fainted. When she recovered consciousness she was astonished to find herself alive.

In the Abbaye Prison, to which she was now conducted, the cell she occupied was that in which Mme Roland had been imprisoned only a few weeks earlier.[1] Three days later Charlotte was transferred to the Conciergerie. There she wrote two letters.[2] They are in the heroic style of her great ancestor; and, as she no doubt intended, they have become famous. One was to Barbaroux, the other to her father. In both she was obviously bent on representing herself as entirely serene. Knowing that her letters would be read by others than those to whom they were addressed, she magnified the importance of the Girondist rising. She little knew that the insurrection was already suppressed, that her own deed had been the one result of Girondist propaganda in Normandy, and that the Girondist rebels had been completely routed by the Jacobin army at Vernon.

She told Barbaroux that the courage of the Girondist volunteers whom she saw set out for Paris on July 8th had finally determined her to slay Marat.[3] That which most unnerved her at the time of the assassination, she said, was the cries of the women. "But," she added, "he who saves his country must not pause to count the cost." To her father, Charlotte insisted that at one time she had hoped to die unknown. Yet she bore upon her person her passport, which was sufficient proof of her identity. Indeed, once the deed was committed she could not but be proud of it, so certain was she that it marked

[1] Mme Roland was then in Ste Pélagie.

[2] These letters are quoted among others by De France, op. cit., pp. 291, *et seq.*

[3] We have mentioned, *ante*, p. 191, that to her judges she said the proscription of the Girondist deputies on May the 31st suggested to her the idea of the murder.

the deliverance of her country by the substitution of peace for anarchy. Consequently she dates her letter "the second day of the Preparation of the Peace;" and of her own imminent death, she writes that her family may rejoice as they think of her "at peace in the Elysian fields with Brutus and other heroes of antiquity." She asks her father's pardon for having disposed of her life without his permission. "If I sought to persuade you that I was going to England, it was because I hoped to remain unknown. I trust that you will not be molested, but you have those at Caen who will protect you. I have chosen as my advocate Gustave Doulcet de Pontécoulant,[1] but only for form's sake, as such a deed admits of no defence. Adieu, my dear papa, I pray of you to forget me, or rather to rejoice at my fate, the cause is noble; I kiss my sister, whom I love with all my heart. Do not forget Corneille's line: *Le crime fait la honte et non pas l'échafaud.*"

Already regarding herself as a heroine and desiring that her memory should be perpetuated, Charlotte allowed her portrait to be painted in prison and asked the painter to send a copy of it to her family. The artist told of the close attention she paid to her toilet, that while in prison she had spent thirty-six francs on the cap she was to wear at her execution. She was methodical in all her ways. A thimble with a needle and thread were in her pocket at the time of her arrest. Before leaving Caen she had taken care to make provision for her old nurse. She had ordered presents to be sent from shops to some of her girl friends and had distributed among them all her books, except the Plutarch which she took with her.

At her trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, the attempt was repeated to draw from her some con-

[1] The nephew of the Mother Superior of her Norman Convent. But Charlotte's letter asking him to be her counsel did not reach him until too late. His place was taken by the young lawyer, Cheveau Lagarde.

fession that might prove her to have been the agent of the Girondins.

"Who inspired you with such bitter hatred?" she was asked.

"I did not need any inspiration. My own hatred was strong enough."

"But this deed must have been suggested to you?"

"Deeds are not well executed when they do not come from one's own heart."

Again, as at the time of the assassination, the grief of Marat's mistress and sister unnerved her. She could not hear out Simonne's evidence, but cut it short, exclaiming, "Yes, it was I who killed him." Neither could she bear to look at the fatal knife when it was produced for her identification, and turning her head away, she said in a halting voice, "Yes, I recognise it."

Except for these two displays of emotion she remained marvellously self-possessed throughout the trial. Perceiving that an officer of the national guard was sketching her, she smilingly turned towards him in order that he might produce a better likeness. The painter Hauer, who had begun her portrait earlier, was continuing it in court. After her inevitable condemnation, returning to her cell for the last hours of life that remained to her, she sent for Hauer to complete his portrait and asked him to send a copy to her family.[1]

Before he had finished, the executioner's knock was heard. At the sight of the scissors and the red blouse, she turned pale and exclaimed: "Already!" Then, glancing at the unfinished portrait, she said to the artist, "Sir, I do not know how to thank you for the trouble you have taken." Taking the scissors from the executioner, she cut off a lock of her hair and

[1] Historians differ as to these artists and the portraits they executed. The above account is Lenôtre's (*Paris Révolutionnaire*, pp. 230-32).

gave it to the artist, saying, "Sir, I thank you for what you have done for me. All I have to offer you as a proof of my gratitude is this lock of hair."[1]

When a priest entered her cell she told him to thank those who had sent him, but she did not need his ministrations. "The only sacrifices I can offer to the Eternal," she said, "are the blood I have spilt and my own that I am about to shed."[2]

At seven o'clock on the evening of the 19th of July,[3] Charlotte passed for the last time beneath the low arched doorway of the Conciergerie prison, and entered the tumbril awaiting her. The crowds were so great that the journey from the prison to the Place de la Revolution[4] took two hours. Barely had the lugubrious procession started when a thunderstorm burst over Paris. But the sky soon cleared, and as the tumbril passed over le Pont Neuf and down la Rue St. Honoré the evening sun came out in all its summer splendour and transfigured in its ruddy glow the martyr's noble figure as, in perfect serenity, she was borne through the howling mob. At the sight of the guillotine she turned pale for a moment. When her head fell, one of the executioner's assistants, more than brutal, took it up, and being a devoted disciple of Marat, struck it there in the face of the crowd. Someone said that the dead face blushed. A murmur of horror escaped from the assembled throng, which would not be satisfied until this gross offender had been imprisoned.

. . . . . .

That one so beautiful and so charming as Charlotte should have had suitors was inevitable. We have already mentioned the fellow-traveller who, having fallen in love at first sight, wished to ask for her hand

[1] Hauer's portrait of Charlotte is now in the Versailles Gallery. It is reproduced with several other portraits by M. Armand Dayot in his *La Révolution Française*, p. 208. Its accuracy as to colour and other points has been called in question.

[2] Michelet, *Femmes de la Révolution*, p. 182.

[3] Now Place de la Concorde.

in marriage. Whether she returned the affection of either of her other admirers, or whether hatred of Marat had driven every other passion from her heart, is impossible to say. There is a story[1] that, before leaving Caen, she had corresponded with a youth of the city, one Franquelin, and had given him her portrait. Franquelin joined the Girondist Volunteers. He was present at the review on the 8th of July. As he and his comrades marched beneath Charlotte's balcony on that memorable Sunday, Pétion, who was near, saw her turn pale and weep. "Do you not want them to go?" he asked, and received no reply. After Charlotte's death, Franquelin withdrew to the depths of the country, where he died not long afterwards, leaving instructions that Charlotte's letters and her portrait should be buried with him in his coffin. Years later, so runs the tale, the coffin was opened and found to contain the letters and the picture.

A better authenticated story[2] is that of the young German from Mainz, Adam Lux. Lux was one of those to whom the Revolution seemed to promise the millennium. He and his fellow-townsmen craved for their city the honour of being included in the French Republic; and Lux was commissioned to go to Paris and lay their request before the Convention. But alas! no sooner had he set foot in the French capital than his dream vanished. He found the Republic a prey to civil strife. He saw with horror a beautiful maiden, the noble apostle of freedom, condemned to sacrifice her life for the cause. Twice only did Lux actually see Charlotte: once before the Revolution Tribunal and then on the scaffold. But that was enough. Henceforth he had no other thought than to rejoin her, as it seemed to him he might, by sharing her fate. The guillotine beneath which she had suffered became to him an altar. He too aspired to die

[1] Rejected as mythical by De France, accepted as fact by another of Charlotte's biographers, La Sicotière.

[2] See Wallon, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 220-24.

beneath its blade. He implored the Convention to accord him that high honour. At the same time he demanded that a statue in memory of Charlotte, inscribed with the words "Greater than Brutus," should be erected to her memory on the place where she had died. So assiduously did he court death by attacks upon the Convention and the Jacobins that he was arrested and condemned. He followed Charlotte to the guillotine on the 4th of November, 1793.

The story of Adam Lux would seem to prove the truth of Michelet's saying that in Charlotte's blood a religion was founded. But the same might be said with truth of Marat's blood. For Marat's admirers[1] were as devoted as Charlotte's, and far more numerous. Among them were multitudes of women: women in Paris and in the Provinces; women more especially of the Revolutionary Clubs. For Marat, among all the leaders of the Revolution, had been most ready to make use of women.[2] By a strange irony of fate, it was he who had proposed to arm with daggers the women of the Republican and Revolutionary Club. Les Clubistes of Macon called themselves Marat's "holy women" (*saintes femmes*) and venerated Marat as a prophet. Crowds of women mingled in the funeral processions and pageants on the 16th, 18th and 28th of July which were so many triumphal processions in honour of Charlotte Corday's victim. The Republican and Revolutionary women claimed to have originated the idea of erecting an obelisk to Marat on la Place de la Réunion (now la Place du Carrousel). Though men denied them this honour, the records of the Jacobin Club[3] show that on the 15th of August Pauline Léon,

[1] In our own country he still has admirers. See Mr. Belfort Bax's *Life of Marat*, and Mr. H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, pp. 608 and 606. "Throughout," writes Mr. Wells, "Marat played a bitter and yet often a just part; he was a great man and a fine intelligence, with a skin of fire; wrung with that organic hate in the blood that is not a product of the mind but of the body."

[2] But he was not without respect for them; and indeed (see *post* p. 257) was something of a Feminist, though an anti-Suffragist.

[3] See Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins*, vol. V, p. 212.

then President of the St. Eustache Club, led a deputation to the Jacobins to ask them to contribute to the obelisk. As it happened, only a temporary wooden obelisk was erected.[1] But in the August ceremony of its inauguration, which was worthy of a more permanent memorial, women played a prominent part. Setting out in procession from their St. Eustache Charnel-house, they took up their places behind the historic bath,[2] and bore on a litter the relics of their prophet, his chair, table, pen and inkstand. These women had followed Charlotte with curses to the guillotine. For them and for others, like Olympe de Gouges, though she was not a Maratiste, Marat's assassin was an inhuman monster, a byword for infamy. Maratist newspapers would not even allow her to have been beautiful: they described her as a hard-featured virago, whose face was covered with pimples. Her unwomanly deed dealt a heavy blow at the Feminist cause, which, as we shall see,[3] was already declining. It was no less fatal to the political party to which she belonged. "She ruins us, but she teaches us how to die," cried Girondin Vergniaud, in prison.

[1] And before anything more durable could be constructed, the political tide had turned, and Marat, whose body had been enshrined in the Panthéon, had been de-Panthéonised.

[2] Or a model of it. For the history of Marat's bath see Lenôtre, *Paris Révolutionnaire*, pp. 238 *et seq.*

[3] *Post*, p. 265.

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN AND RELIGION

La femme est bien plus que pontife: elle est symbole et religion.—Michelet.

In religion, as in every other department of life, the Revolution was a series of experiments. At the outset the Constituent Assembly arrogated to itself the power of determining the national religion; and other Assemblies followed its example. Hence, for twelve years, from 1789 to 1801, we see the French established religion describing a complete circle. It began with the orthodox Church of Rome as it had been constituted in 1516 by the Concordat, between King Francis I. and Pope Leo X.; it passed through the National Church as organised by the Constituent Assembly, in August, 1789, the Worship of Reason, instituted by the Convention in November, 1793, and the Worship of the Supreme Being, inaugurated by Robespierre in May, 1794; it returned to the National Christian Church as restored by the Directory in 1796, and it finally came back to the Church of Rome as established by the Concordat between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII. in 1801.[1]

When the men of the Revolution required women to follow them[2] in this feverish canter through successive phases of religious experience, from Ultramontanism to Erastianism, from Erastian Christianity

[1] See Salomon Reinach, *Orpheus, Histoire Générale des Religions* (1909), pp. 521-23 and 540-41.

[2] Prudhomme, editor of the influential newspaper *Les Révolutions de Paris,* denied women the right to hold any religious opinion of their own.

to Atheism, from Atheism to Theism and back to Christianity again, they found some of them lagging behind in the race. Many looked back, like Lot's wife, to the country of Ultramontane Orthodoxy, to the old faith and the old ritual. They fainted and faltered in this giddy spiritual whirl. Not a few of them clung to the old faith. Some practised the ancient rites in secret while outwardly conforming to the new. Many refused to recognise the priests who, having taken the oath to the Constitution, were installed by the government in the places of those who had refused it. In one parish the constitutional priest, on his arrival, was met by a shower of stones from sixty women, who pursued him to his presbytery.

Danton's first wife, Gabrielle Charpentier, in spite of her husband's scepticism, openly remained a devout Catholic until her death in February, 1793. Danton, who adored her, respected her faith, and, when she went to Mass, even accompanied her to the church door.[1]

The wife of the Atheist, Hébert, was an ex-nun, who, though she had availed herself of the Convention's law enabling ex-nuns and priests to marry, continued in other respects to practise her religion.

Many women, though willing to be Vicaresses of Bray, found it difficult to relinquish the habit of crossing themselves. One newspaper recommended that those who could not cure themselves of this superstitious practice might at least render it innocuous by mumbling as they made the sign, instead of the traditional phrase "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," the words "in the name of my country, liberty, and equality."[2] In certain towns the authorities reproached Revolutionary women with

[1] See Lenôtre, *Paris Révolutionnaire*, p. 258; also Michelet, *Femmes de la Révolution*, pp. 202-6.

[2] Villiers, *Histoire des Clubs de Femmes*, p. 123.

attending church more frequently than their club meetings.[1] In the very clubs themselves women members were known to have demanded the State's return to Orthodoxy.[2]

But, at the same time, other women were changing their religious opinions with startling rapidity. While at Evreux, in 1791, women, and men too, inaugurated the celebration of the 14th of July by a Solemn Mass; two years later the same women were commemorating the Republican anniversary by making a public bonfire of priests' vestments, missels, croziers, and other *bon-dieuseries*, as they would have put it. The last fuel thrown on the fire was a statue of St. Louis.

The women who most readily approved of these religious changes were those who, like Charlotte Corday, Mme Roland, Mme de Staël, and Mme Jullien, had drunk deep of eighteenth century philosophy even before the Revolution.

"Was it to a juring or a non-juring priest that you confessed at Caen?" the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal asked Charlotte Corday. "Neither to one nor to the other," she replied. "I had no confessor."[3]

Though Mme Roland as a child had intended to be a nun, in early girlhood her faith had been undermined by those very works of Bossuet that had been given her to strengthen it. "However favourable they were to the cause they were intended to defend," she writes,[4] "they enlightened me as to the attacks made upon that cause and taught me to call my belief in question. That was the first step. Many others were to follow before I arrived at the scepticism that was to be my final stage, after I had passed through Jansenism, Cartesianism, Stoicism, and Deism. What

[1] Villiers, *ibid.*, p. 168.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[3] Wallon, op. cit., vol. I, p. 210.
[4] *Mémoires Particuliers* (ed. Claude Perroud), vol. II, pp. 70-71.

a long road to terminate in the patriotism which has brought me to these bonds ! " Elsewhere she writes of the religious ecstasy of her adolescence and of the philosophy of later years. This philosophy seemed as if it would for ever preserve her from that tempest of passion which now in middle age threatened to overwhelm her, though she struggled against it with all " the vigour of an athlete."

Mme de Staël was brought up by parents of Protestant origin on the Protestant principle of free inquiry (*le libre examen*) as opposed to the Catholic principle of authority. This critical spirit was among the many features of English mentality that she most admired. " It was one of those sources of perfectibility," she wrote, " which had existed in England for more than a century."[1] But, as in the case of most Protestants, there were limits to the scope of Mme de Staël's " free inquiry." One principle she never questioned was the moral government of the universe.[2] All her life long she was an ardent Deist, and shortly before her death, in 1818, she followed the tendency of the time and reverted to something like orthodox Christianity. That religious ideas " contribute to the happiness of mankind " had always been an article of her faith; and for that reason, as she expressed it, she had hesitated to deprive herself of them.

Mme de Staël devotes one chapter of her " Considerations on the French Revolution," to a discussion of the ecclesiastical policy of the Constituent Assembly.[3] She thoroughly approves of the confiscation of Church property,[4] but she as thoroughly disapproves of the creation of a constitutional Church.

[1] *Considérations sur la Révolution Française, Œuvres Complètes,* vol. XII, p. 208.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 406.
[3] Chap. xiii. *Des décrets de l'assemblée constituante relativement au clergé.*
[4] Though she admits (*ibid.,* p. 388) that her father, Necker, would have preferred only a partial confiscation.

"A great fault, which I think the Constituent Assembly might easily have avoided," she wrote, "was the fatal invention of a constitutional clergy. To exact from priests an oath forbidden by their conscience, and when they refused, to persecute them by depriving them of their pension, and later by deportation, was to degrade those who took the oath because of the loaves and fishes that went with it." To act thus, she continues, was "to substitute political for religious intolerance." Moreover, this measure resulted in alienating from Rome "the clergy who enrolled themselves behind the banner of the Revolution." Such priests were no good at all. Catholics would have nothing to do with them. Philosophers did not need any priests. The juring clergy were merely a kind of militia discredited in advance, who could do nothing but harm to the Government they were supposed to support.

Mme Jullien, a devout disciple of Jean Jacques, had subscribed to his Savoyard Vicar's creed long before the Revolution. Her letters to her son in England abound with maxims culled from her master's works. "One thing is certain," she writes,[1] "that we are born good and rational. The scandal of the human race is that a vicious minority attracts more attention than a virtuous majority. . . . I don't want to be a silly old mother, boring you with ethical commonplaces. I am addressing a friend, whom nature has formed within me, of the most precious elements of my being, sensibility and love of virtue; with that I have nothing to prescribe and everything to hope."

Mme Jullien had accepted Rousseau's philosophy, and become a worshipper of the Supreme Being before Robespierre established that cult as the national religion. References to *l'Etre Suprême* abound in Mme Jullien's pages. Every day she prays to the

[1] Op. cit., pp. 214, 215.

Supreme Being to keep her son "in happiness and virtue, for the two are inseparable,"[1] she says.

In April, 1792, she writes[2] that the wrath of the Supreme Being must have been aroused by the insolence of the aristocrats. A few weeks later she gives an interesting account of a sermon she heard preached at Saint Eustache by a priest who had taken the oath to the Government.[3] "I went with Mlle C.," she writes, "to the sermon at Saint Eustache. Never, no never, was the pulpit of truth more worthily occupied. The preacher's discourse, sparkling with eloquence, was on the best way to prevent civil war and to conquer our foreign enemies. Holding the Gospels in one hand and the Constitution in the other, with all the fire of genius he preached liberty, equality, and fraternity. The pictures he painted of the perversity of tyrants and courts, of the degradation and misery of the people, were so strikingly true that never since the beginning of the Revolution have I read anything so fine and so convincing. Sadly pathetic was the irony of the contrast he drew with consummate art between all this and a citizen king who, devoutly faithful to his oath, would walk firmly in the career of virtue, rising with the nation to the highest pinnacle of glory. . . . There is nothing so grand in the greatest oratorical triumphs of Fléchier and Bourdaloue. Just when, in his sublimest invocation, he was calling down the thunder of Divine justice on the heads of the guilty, a real clap of thunder resounded throughout the vaults of the church. Roman superstition would have interpreted this incident as signifying that Jupiter was favourable. As for us, we marvelled in silence at this chance coincidence that had occurred at so appropriate a moment; and in our hearts we supplicated the Divinity to manifest his justice and his power in a manner equally

[1] Op. cit., p. 168.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[3] *Ibid.*, *pp.* 94, 95.

pronounced and terrible. The congregation was so delighted with the words of this worthy minister of the Supreme Being that their applause continued long and resounded on every hand."

One day, in the summer of 1792, on entering the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, Mme Jullien finds in the nave a superb stone tablet on which was engraved the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The sight of it, she says,[1] redoubled her devotion, and she offered up an ardent prayer.

The Revolution's protean changes of dogma and ecclesiastical organisation were accompanied by other changes in customs, festivals, the names of days and months, of streets and families, which closely affected the daily life of the people.

The Convention, by various decrees, favoured the marriage of priests and of ex-nuns. Prints of the time[2] represent ecclesiastics of both sexes hastening in multitudes to avail themselves of this new liberty. More than two thousand priests are said to have married. The first bishop to take to himself a wife was Thomas Lindet, Bishop of the Eure Department.[3] He married in November, 1792. On the following 23rd of September, Pontard, Bishop of Dordogne, presented his wife to the Convention. Taking her on to the platform, he described her as " poor in fortune, but rich in virtues, of the class of *sans-culottes,* in which reside frankness and amiable simplicity." Cambon, President of the Assembly, greeted husband and wife with *l'accolade fraternelle.*[4]

Everywhere the revolutionary spirit thrust itself into ecclesiastical affairs, including baptisms, weddings and burials. A drummer of the Faubourg Saint Antoine had his baby daughter christened at his

[1] Op. cit., p. 186.
[2] See Collection Hennin in the Galerie des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
[3] When the country was divided into departments a bishop was assigned to each one.
[4] Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison et de l'Etre Suprême,* p. 30.

parish church, the Church of Sainte Marguerite, by the famous Constitutional Bishop, Fauchet, whom we have already met as l'Abbé Fauchet of the Social Circle and the "Bouche de Fer" newspaper.[1] "Pétion Nationale Pique" were the topical names bestowed on this unhappy infant. Never would Mlle P.N.P. be able to conceal her age, as some women are said to do, for a Pétion-Nationale-Pique could only have been born in the year 1792, when Pétion was Mayor of Paris, and in the summer of that year when the Mayor, at the height of a popularity he was soon to lose, was introducing the proletariat, armed with pikes, into the hitherto middle class National Guard. The metallic element in the baby's name received visible expression after the christening when women of the *faubourg,* armed with swords, formed them into an arch of metal over the head of the newly baptised infant, while loud cries of "Long live the nation" resounded throughout the church.[2]

But by that time certain leaders of the Revolution were ceasing to have their children baptised at all. Camille Desmoulins set the example.

For this reason, and also because it affords many striking illustrations of the emotional and religious side of the Revolution, the romantic story of Camille and Lucile Desmoulins belongs to this chapter.

In December, 1790, at St. Sulpice, and according to the rites of the Catholic Church, Camille had married the pretty, bewitching Lucile Duplessis. But when, in the next year, their son Horace was born, his father took him to the "Mairie" to be registered instead of to the church to be christened. Poor little Horace Desmoulins, of whom "Mme Guillotine" was so soon to make an orphan, was the first Parisian child to have his name inscribed on the newly established civic register which was to replace the parish registers. The father of Horace

[1] *Ante,* p. 92.
[2] See Lacour, op. cit., p. 271 and n.

could not let slip this opportunity of preaching the gospel according to the Revolution. Hence, after his son's name, Camille wrote in the register the following proposal: "Seeing that liberty of worship has been decreed by the Constitution, and that by a decree of the Legislative Assembly the civic status of citizens may be declared otherwise than by religious ceremonies, there ought to be raised in every municipality an altar, on which the father, assisted by two witnesses, shall offer his children to *la patrie*."

Then Camille goes on to justify his own action in dispensing with a religious ceremony: it is in order that when he grows up his son may not reproach his father with having associated him by oath with religious opinions which could not possibly have been his, and with having on his entrance into the world forced him to distinguish between the nine hundred and odd religions which divide mankind, at a time when he (the infant) was not even capable of distinguishing his own mother.[1]

At length the mother is mentioned. One had wondered when she was coming in. But Camille's ignoring of her hitherto may be excused by the fact that these dedicatory or registration ceremonies took place so soon after birth that the mother was never able to be present.

Lucile Desmoulins was far too charming a person to be ignored either by her husband or his friends. *L'éternelle rieuse* someone has called her. But in those sad days tears were never far behind laughter, and so it was with Lucile. She was like an April day, all showers and sunshine.

Among "the charming and heroic ladies" of that time, Michelet admires most Mme Desmoulins and Mme de Condorcet. Men of future ages, he prophesies, will regret not having known them. Even the De Goncourts, who failed to see any attractiveness in revolutionary women, made an exception for Lucile;

[1] See Lenôtre, *Vieilles Maisons, Vieux Papiers* (1900), p. 34, n.

pauvre grisette, they called her, *égarée et perdue en cette épopée sanglante, figure petite mais amiable, qui sourit, pleure et meurt.*[1]

The term *grisette* is misleading. Lucile belonged to an honest family of *la petite bourgeoisie* and brought her husband a certain fortune.

The Desmoulins love story is an idyll. Camille, the journalist, the hero of the Palais Royal, fell in love with Lucile and her no less beautiful mother when he saw them walking one day in the Luxembourg Gardens. He obtained an introduction to them, was invited to their flat in the Rue de Tournon, and to their country house at Bourg-la-Reine. During these visits Camille soon discovered that it was Lucile who had conquered his heart. But he was then only a poor journalist, and M. Duplessis would not hear of him as a husband for his daughter. The lovers waited for some years. Camille had influential friends: Robespierre had been his schoolfellow; his ability as a journalist attracted the Marquis de Sillery and the Duc d'Orléans himself. They interceded for him with Duplessis. Before such powerful pleading, even the obduracy of Lucile's father gave way, and on the 29th of December, 1790, she was married to Camille. The Duc d'Orléans furnished their flat in la Rue de l'Odéon; and the witnesses of the marriage were five of the most prominent politicians of the day: Pétion, Brissot, Mercier, Sillery, and Robespierre.[2] Lucile's tea-parties in the Rue de l'Odéon soon became the centre of all that was lively, gay, and witty on the left bank. The clever Mlle de Kéralio helped the pretty young hostess at the tea-table. The Dantons were frequent guests. Le Duc d'Orléans was sometimes present. And for a while all seemed sunshine and laughter. But Baby Horace was only a few

[1] *La Société Française pendant la Révolution*, pp. 372-73.

[2] With the exception of Mercier, who survived the Revolution, all these witnesses were within the next few years to come to a tragic end; Brissot, Sillery and Robespierre beneath the knife of the guillotine, Pétion to die of starvation or by his own hand.

months old when the horrors of the Revolution began to cast a shadow over this charming home.

The evening of the 9th of August, 1792, before the second attack on the Tuileries, Lucile spent at the Dantons.[1] "Danton was very resolute," wrote Lucile afterwards. "I laughed like a madwoman. They were afraid the affair (the attack on the Tuileries of the 10th) would not come off. . . ." "How can you laugh like that?" said Mme Danton. "Alas!" said I, "it only means that I shall shed many tears before the evening is over." "The night was fine. We went out. There were a great many people in the streets. A group of *sans-culottes* went by, crying, 'Long live the nation.' Then soldiers on horseback. A shiver came over me, and I said to Mme Danton, 'Let us go in.' She laughed at my timidity. Then, as I continued to be nervous, she also became afraid. I said to her mother, 'You will hear the tocsin sounding before long.' At the house people were trooping in. Camille, my dear Camille, came in with a gun. My God! I ran into the alcove, hid my face in my hands, and began to cry. Still, ashamed of appearing so weak, I would not openly tell Camille how I hoped he would keep out of it all. But I waited for an opportunity to confide my fears to him without being heard. He tried to reassure me by saying he would keep with Danton. I heard afterwards that he had run great risks. . . . I hid in the unlighted salon in order to be away from the preparations. Our patriots set out."

When towards midnight the tocsin sounded from the tower of the Cordeliers Church, Lucile knelt at the window, hid her face in her handkerchief and listened. From time to time people came in bringing good news or bad. At one o'clock Camille returned. "He fell asleep on my shoulder," writes his wife. Mme

[1] They may at that time have been living in the same house as the Desmoulins. (See Lenôtre, *Paris Révolutionnaire*, p. 258, n.)

Danton seemed to expect to hear of her husband's death. She listened, grew pale, and then fainted.

"O my poor Camille," cries Lucile at the close of her narrative. "What will become of us? . . . My God, if there be a God, save the men who are worthy of Thee. . . . We long to be free. But how terrible is the cost!"[1]

Many a time throughout the months of terror that remained to her did Lucile cry to the God whose existence she doubted. "If Thou dost exist," she prays, "receive the offering of a heart that loves Thee. Enlighten my soul. I hate the world. . . . Is that wrong? Why dost Thou allow it to be so wicked? . . . O my God! . . . When can I, gazing upon Thy glory, prostrate myself at Thy feet, and bathe them with my tears? . . . I adore Thee without understanding Thee. I pray to Thee without knowing Thee. Thou art in my heart. I feel it, yet I divine Thee not. Thou art the secret of nature. This happiness that we seek, where can we find it? . . . No, happiness is not to be found in this world. In vain do we pursue it. Happiness is but an empty dream."[2]

In these tempestuous days the emotions of trust and despair, of gaiety and anguish, succeeded one another rapidly in Lucile's simple, childlike breast. When, towards the end of 1793, Camille had dared to oppose his former schoolfellow, Robespierre, in his thirst for blood, and to propose the institution of a committee of clemency, his wife courageously supported him. At lunch, one day, a friend tried to dissuade Camille from pursuing his perilous course. Lucile rose, went round to her husband, kissed him and said: "Let him alone. Let him fulfil his mission. He will save France. And anyone who disagrees with me shall not have any of my chocolate."

[1] Quoted by Michelet, *Femmes de la Révolution*, pp. 225-27.
[2] Lairthullier, *Femmes Célèbres de la Révolution*, p. 16.

Camille was arrested at the same time as his friend, Danton, and imprisoned in the Luxembourg. Then Lucile joined the throng of women, children, and old men who waited daily hour after hour on the broad walk leading to the prison, hoping for a sight of some beloved face through the grated windows. The language of flowers, much studied at that time, was used by these faithful watchers. One would hold up a posy of pansies or some other flower, the special significance of which would have been communicated to the prisoner by a bribed warder. In this way the captives learned news of the outside world. Thus was a woman prisoner told that her husband was dead by a friend outside in the park holding up a bunch of scabias, symbol of widowhood.[1]

Camille's cell looked on " the garden where," as he wrote to Lucile, " I spent eight years of my life following you."[2] " There is one peep over the Luxembourg that brings back to my memory a host of recollections of our love. I am in solitary confinement, but never in thought and imagination . . . have I been nearer to you, to your mother, and to our little Horace. I only write you this first little note to ask for the most necessary things. But I shall spend all my time in prison writing to you." Camille fulfilled his promise; and the letters that followed are all as full as the first of passionate love for his wife and child. But Camille's imprisonment was short. Arrested on the night of the 30th to 31st of March (1794) he was executed on the 5th of April, having first been removed to la Conciergerie.

Five days later his wife followed him to the scaffold. She had been arrested on the ill-founded charge of plotting to deliver her husband and other captives from prison. Camille, the impulsive, effervescent journalist, whose nervous temperament betrayed itself by a stammering in his speech which

[1] Louise Fusil, *Souvenirs*, p. 117.
[2] Wallon, *Tribunal Révolutionnaire*, vol. III, p. 148.

he could never overcome—this excitable Camille completely lost control of himself on the way to the guillotine. He struggled to loosen his bonds. He hurled down curses on the Convention and its dictator, Robespierre, until Danton, who was with him in the tumbril, adjured him to be calm and to ignore the vile rabble (*cette vile canaille*).

Lucile had seemed as excitable as her husband as long as they were together, but once he was dead her effervescence subsided. At her trial she appeared indifferent to all that was going on around her. "*La femme Camille*," said an eye-witness,[1] "overwhelmed, doubtless, by the atrocity of her judges, did not raise her eyes, did not betray either hope or fear, but meekly awaited her sentence." I venture to question the cause which this eye-witness assigned for Lucile's calmness. He may not have possessed that knowledge of her previous life and character with which abundant documents have equipped the judgment of posterity. We now see her to have been not only *l'éternelle rieuse* but *l'éternelle amoureuse*. She was one of the few Frenchwomen in whose heart the passion of love beat more powerfully than that of maternal affection.[2] Their little Horace both these lovers, Camille and Lucile, were content to leave to his grandmother. Camille refers to him frequently in the letters he wrote to his wife from prison. But, after the paroxysms of that last fatal ride, his final word was of Lucile. "My wife, my beloved, I shall never see you again." But Camille's ordeal had been infinitely harder than Lucile's. He had been called upon to leave her behind. When Lucile died, Camille having gone, life had for her been shorn of all attractiveness and meaning. Camille in his last letter to her from prison had tried to inspire her with a consolation which can hardly have been his in face of his last words on the

[1] See Wallon, op. cit., p. 210.

[2] The date of their child's birth when compared with that of their marriage is significant.

scaffold. Yet, in his desire to comfort Lucile he had written to her : " I believe in God and in a future life." Those words, treasured in Lucile's heart, rendered her indifferent to all earthly affairs, caused her to look to " Mère Guillotine " as the deliverer, inspired the last little note she wrote to her mother : " Good night, dear mama. I shed a tear. It is for you. I shall fall asleep in the calm of innocence." On her way to the scaffold she was perfectly serene. *Comme elle est belle,* exclaimed the crowds who followed her on her last journey.

There was one member of the Convention to whom Lucile and her mother had looked to save Camille : that was Robespierre. As we have seen, he and Camille had been schoolfellows. Before her marriage to Camille, Robespierre is said to have been in love with Lucile. Their engagement had been talked of. After Camille's arrest, Lucile had written entreating Robespierre to save her husband. Whether the letter ever reached the " sea-green monster," those who have tried to whitewash him suggest a doubt. It is certainly doubtful whether Robespierre received the following letter[1] written by Mme Duplessis asking him to save her daughter.

" CITIZEN ROBESPIERRE,—Is it not enough to have assassinated your best friend? Do you now thirst after his wife's blood? Your monster of a Fouquier-Tinville[2] has just signed the order for her to be taken to the scaffold. In two hours she will have ceased to exist. Robespierre, if you are not a tiger in human form, if Camille's blood has not intoxicated you so as to deprive you of your reason, if you remember the evenings spent in our home, the caresses you lavished upon little Horace when you held him on

[1] See Wallon, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 213-14.
[2] President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, who was himself to be guillotined later.

your knee, if you remember that you were to have been my son-in-law, spare an innocent victim. But if yours is the lion's fury, then come and take us also, Adèle and Horace, come and tear us to pieces with hands still stained with Camille's blood. Come, come, let one grave bury us all."

Whether Robespierre ever received that letter or not was all one, for there was nothing in the purely human sentiments it expressed to appeal to the heart, if he had one, or to the intelligence of this Superman. His was the cold, unflinching cruelty of the idealist. No personal considerations that interfered with the pursuance of his convictions were ever allowed to weigh with him for a single moment. However, he had believed he could save France. But in the spring of 1794 doubt began to assail him. His dictatorship had for some months been threatened. This opposition came from two directions: from the moderate party, led by Danton and Desmoulins, and from the ultra-terrorists led by Hébert and Chaumette.[1] The two latter had been guillotined on the 24th of March. Hébert's widow, the ex-nun,[2] suffered the death penalty at the same time as Lucile. Not even Mme Hébert's Catholicism saved her, though one might have thought it would have placated Robespierre. He could certainly not have included her in the accusation he was bringing against her husband and his followers of going too far in the dechristianisation of France.

To trace the progress of this anti-Christian movement, this rise of the new religion of *civisme* which women professed as well as men, we must go back to the summer of 1791, when, as we have seen,[3] Camille Desmoulins had taken his new-born son to the Mairie. Camille's proposal, written in the register on that day, had been adopted by the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly had decreed that throughout France in every commune an altar to

[1] See *post*, p. 222. [2] See *ante*, p. 205. [3] *Ante*, p. 211.

la patrie should be erected in the room in which marriages were celebrated and births and deaths registered. "Thus," says Michelet,[1] "the three most solemn moments of human destiny were consecrated at the altar of the commune, and the religion of the family was blended with that of *la patrie*."

The world has almost forgotten that Joseph Fouché, chief of police, millionaire and Duke of Otranto under Napoleon, had once been distinguished for his civic piety after the new model. Yet he had carried on a veritable dragonade in the department of Nièvre, whither the Convention had sent him to superintend the administration of the law against suspected persons. By Fouché's order, churches were stripped of their ornaments, priests imprisoned, all the insignia of Christianity obliterated, and the gate of every cemetery inscribed with the words *la mort est un sommeil éternel*. When, on the 10th of August, 1793, Mme Fouché gave birth to a son at Nevers, the father himself at the municipal altar dedicated the child to *la patrie* and gave him the name of "Nièvre."

The altar had been set up on a vast plain outside the town. On it burned the sacred fire of Vesta, and near by was the Temple of Love for the celebration of marriages.

Some marriages were made without any public ceremony whatever. One was the marriage—for the couple themselves and their families considered it as such—of Jean Paul Marat and Simonne Evrard. On a beautiful day Marat took Simonne[2] by the hand, and together they knelt in the sunlight, while Marat called the heavens to witness that he would never take to himself another wife. After Marat's death the following engagement was found among his papers. "The admirable qualities of Mlle Simonne Evrard," it ran, "having captivated my heart, whose homage she has accepted, I leave to her as the pledge of my

[1] *Les Femmes de la Révolution*, p. 223.
[2] See *ante*, p. 194.

fidelity during the journey I am about to take to London, my plighted troth to give her my hand immediately on my return. If all my affection should not seem to her a sufficient guarantee of my fidelity, let this engagement be forgotten and let me be covered with infamy." At Paris, the first of January, 1792, signed "Jean Paul Marat, the Friend of the People."[1]

Here again, and in the next chapter,[2] we find Marat dignified and honourable in his attitude towards women.

Simonne, young, well educated and intelligent,[3] was far from being, as she is depicted by Carlyle and other historians, a low creature, "a squalid washer-woman." She had admired the patriotism and fire of Marat's writings before she knew him. Like Charlotte Corday, only with a very different intention, she went to visit the People's Friend. She found him worried by financial affairs, about to give up the publication of his famous newspaper *l'Ami du Peuple*, and to go to England, there to return to the medical profession on which he had practised in England some years previously. Simonne, inspired with that patriotic zeal which inflamed so many women of the Revolution, at once and unreservedly placed all her modest fortune at Marat's disposal. Marat still went to England, apparently, but only for a brief visit. On his return he accepted Simonne's money and used it to establish printing works,[4] the manager of which married Simonne's sister Catherine. Both before and after Marat's death, his family treated Simonne as his wife. She and Marat's sister, Albertine, lived in Paris together until Albertine's death, which Simonne survived many years.

[1] See Vatel, Charles, *Charlotte de Corday et les Girondins* (3 vols., 1864-72), vol. I, p. 159.
[2] See *ante*, p. 202 n., and *post*, p. 257.
[3] See Aulard, *Orateurs de l'Assemblée Legislative et de la Convention*, vol. II, p. 331 and n.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 331, n.

By the summer of 1793, when Marat was assassinated, the apostles of the new *civisme* were finding it necessary to make some concession to those anthropomorphic obsessions which, from the earliest animism down to the present day, have ever tinged the religious conceptions of mankind. Parisians of the eighteenth century, like Galileans of old, looked for a sign. And the founders of the new religion did not withhold it. Hébert and Chaumette, so soon to share the fate of other founders of religions, not satisfied with erecting on the ruins of the Bastille a colossal female statue of Liberty,[1] resolved to give their adherents a living symbol. *Pas une statue morte,* said Hébert, *mais une image vivante de cette divinité. Un chef d'œuvre de la nature,* said Chaumette.

So Chaumette, that arch anti-Feminist be it noticed, took woman from the domestic hearth, the place to which on other occasions he was always relegating her, and brought her out into the churches, now called "the Temples of Reason." There he put her on a pedestal, exhibited her as the Goddess of Reason and exposed her to such insults that one Goddess of Reason in a Norman town is said to have worn inscribed on her Phrygian cap the words *ne me tournez pas en licence.*[2]

In November and December, 1793, throughout Paris and the Provinces, Feasts of Reason inaugurated the new religion. The most impressive of all was that held at Paris, in the Cathedral Church of Notre Dame, on the 10th of November. "Ah! what a fine festival we celebrated last decade,"[3] cried Hébert in his newspaper *Le Père Duchesne.* "In the place

[1] See Armand Dayot's *La Révolution Française,* p. 253, which contains a reproduction of a drawing of this gross statue by Mounet, engraved by Helman.

[2] Flaubert used to tell this story of one of his own relatives. See *Contributions à l'Histoire Religieuse de la Révolution Française* (Alcan). Preface by Gabriel Monod, p. 4, n.

[3] In its reform of the Calendar the Convention had not only begun a new era with the proclamation of the Republic in 1792, but had changed the names and duration of the months and replaced weeks by decades.

of the altar, or rather of the boards on which the charlatans (the clergy) had performed, the throne of Liberty had been set up.[1] A charming woman, as beautiful as the goddess she represented, was seated on an eminence. In her hand a pike, on her head the red cap. Around her were all *les jolies damnées de l'Opera* . . . singing patriotic hymns more sweetly than angels."

Above the white-robed goddess, with her mantle of blue and her red head-dress, on the top of " the mountain " as it was called, was a little round classical temple, with the words *à la philosophie* inscribed in large letters right across its façade, and on each side of the door were busts, probably intended to represent Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin and Montesquieu. Beneath the goddess and half-way up " the mountain " " the flame of truth " burned brightly on a little classical altar. Behind and around this eminence, draperies hanging from the pillars completely concealed the ecclesiastical character of the building. Music played by the national guard opened the ceremony. Meanwhile processions of young girls in white, wearing wreaths of flowers on their heads and tricolour sashes, and bearing torches, came forth from the left and right of the temple. They passed each other before the altar, bowed, and then re-ascended " the mountain " and disappeared. Then the goddess on her throne received the homage of the Republicans present, who, with arms outstretched, sang to Gossec's music Marie Joseph Chénier's famous hymn composed for the occasion :

Descends, O Liberté, fille de la Nature:
Le peuple a reconquis son pouvoir immortel:
Sur les pompeux débris de l'antique imposture
Ses mains relèvent ton autel.
Venez, vainqueurs des rois, l'Europe vous contemple;
Venez, sur les faux dieux étendez vos succès;
Toi, sainte Liberté, viens habiter ce temple,
Sois la déesse des François.[2]

[1] Aulard, *Culte de la Raison et de l'Etre Suprême*, p. 83.

[2] " Descend, O liberty, Daughter of Nature. The people have reconquered their immortal power. On the august ruins of the

As the last lines of the hymn died away, the goddess rose, and, ascending "the mountain," was about to enter the temple, when she paused on the threshold to cast one glance over the vast congregation. As she disappeared through the temple door, enthusiastic applause, mingled with oaths of eternal fidelity to Reason, burst from the assembled throng.

The organisers of the Feast of Reason had been disappointed in their hope that the members of the Convention would have attended in a body. As the Convention had not come to Reason, Reason must go to the Convention. Accordingly, as soon as the ceremony at Notre Dame was over, the goddess, escorted by an imposing procession, proceeded to the Tuileries, where the Convention was then sitting. At the head of the procession marched a company of musicians and a band of young republican soldiers singing patriotic hymns, with refrains and choruses in which the onlookers joined. Next came the maidens in white, and then the goddess seated on her throne, which was

ancient imposture their hands restore thy altar. Come, conquerors of kings, Europe beholds you, come proclaim your victories over false gods; and thou, sacred Liberty, come dwell in this temple. Be henceforth Goddess of the French." The following is a free rendering of the above into English verse by a very young poet, John R. Hicks :

"Come down to us, O Liberty,
Come down, great Nature's child—
Lo! France again has won her power
Immortal, undefiled :
The awful ruins lie around
With ancient error scored,
But by our hands upon this ground
Thy altar is restored.

O vanquishers of kings, appear,
On you does Europe gaze;
O shout aloud, the song of joy
O'er conquered gods upraise—
O sacred Liberty, come down
With fire Earth cannot quench—
Here is thy temple and thy crown,
Be Goddess of the French."

borne by four citizens. This group, having entered the Assembly Hall, paused in front of the President. The maidens formed a circle round the throne, while the rest of the procession defiled past, repeating the hymns they had sung at the Cathedral. What could the Convention do now but join in the movement and vote that henceforth Notre Dame should be the Temple of Reason! Deputy Romme[1] proposed that the goddess should take her place at the President's side. Chaumette conducted her on to the platform. The President and his secretaries greeted her with the fraternal kiss amidst great applause. Then the members of the Convention escorted her back to Notre Dame, where the ceremony that had been performed earlier in the day was repeated in their honour.[2]

Who was this Parisian Goddess of Reason? Carlyle says it was Mlle Candeille, Michelet Mlle Maillard, another actress. Others would have it to be Claire Lacombe, others Mme Momoro, others again Mlle Aubry, also an actress. Later authorities are content to confess that they do not know, although they believe it to have been one of the actresses from the opera.[3] Mme Momoro, the wife of the famous bookseller and printer, may have been the goddess at St. Sulpice or at St. André des Arts, or at St. Eustache, or perhaps at all three. It would seem highly probable that the handsome Claire Lacombe personated Reason in one or other of the Parisian churches, for she was, as we shall see,[4] closely associated with the political party of *les Enragés*, the Ultra-Terrorists, to which the inaugurators of the new religion, Hébert and Chaumette, belonged.

As to the provincial Goddesses of Reason, to identify them with certainty is no easier than to identify the Parisian Goddesses. They were not infrequently, we are told, members of respectable

[1] See *post*, p. 239.
[2] Aulard, *ibid.*, pp. 57-58.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[4] *Post*, p. 258.

families, and, we trust, well chaperoned, because in some places the worship of Reason showed a tendency to degenerate into something not unlike saturnalia.

This aspect of the new cult, added to its negation of Theism and the fact that its inaugurators were his political foes, provoked Robespierre against it. Much has been written of Robespierre's attitude towards women.[1] Whether he was so cold as some have maintained, who can tell? He would appear not to have been insusceptible to the charms of Lucile Desmoulins. There is the much questioned story of his betrothal to Eleanor Duplay, daughter of the master cabinet-maker, at those house in the Rue St. Honoré he lodged.[2]

The Duchesse d'Abrantès used to tell that when a beautiful woman went to plead with Robespierre for her husband's release, as soon as she had gone the Incorruptible turned to his companion, saying, "Do you know that woman is pretty? But very pretty."

As to women's attitude towards Robespierre, there is little doubt: they either hated him as a tyrant like the young Royalist girl, Cécile Renault,[3] or they worshipped him as a prophet. The cult of Robespierre was even more widely spread among women than the cult of Marat. On the days when he was to speak, women crowded into the galleries of the Convention and applauded loudly. *Les Tricoteuses de Robespierre* they were called. As far back as 1792, Condorcet, writing in *la Chronique de Paris*, on the 9th of November, wonders why Robespierre always and everywhere, at his house, at the Jacobins, at the Cordeliers, at the Convention, is followed by so many

[1] See Fleischmann's book, *Robespierre et les Femmes*. The matter is discussed at length in the standard biography of Robespierre (3 vols.) by Ernest Hamel.

[2] *Ante*, p. 152.

[3] See Wallon, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 7. Having been found at Robespierre's house with a knife in her pocket, she was charged with being implicated in a plot to murder him, and condemned to death with her whole family, father, mother, and brother.

women. It must be, says Condorcet, that Robespierre has founded a kind of sect. He is a priest who has his *dévotes*. Obviously Robespierre's power lies with the distaff (*toute sa puissance est en quenouille*). Thus a patriotic song of 1793 runs :

Suivi de ses dévotes
Et de sa cour entouré
Le Dieu des sans-culottes
Robespierre est entré.

Women wrote to him declaring he was Messiah. Some beheld in the sky the *constellation Robespierre*. Others wore his image round their necks as a charm. The very aloofness of Robespierre towards women, as well as his eloquence and his power, would suffice to attract many. Moreover, he might be considered good-looking, despite his bilious sea-green appearance; and he always dressed with great care.

" What a man is this Robespierre with all these women ! " cried one. " Why, he is a priest who wishes to become God."[1]

And as a god one woman at least, unfortunately for Robespierre, would seem to have regarded him. This was Catherine Théot, a spinster of over eighty,[2] who considered herself to be the mother of God and Robespierre her son, or at least so Robespierre's enemies alleged. Of humble origin, she was born at Avranches and received little education. She knew how to read, but could not write; and, when she grew up, she entered domestic service. Her religious mania, for it was nothing short of that, began to develop when she became servant in the Convent of les Miriamionnes at Paris. There she communicated every day; and for eighteen years, neither in summer nor in winter did she ever miss five o'clock Mass. Meanwhile she lost no opportunity of mortifying

[1] See Vilate, *Mystères de la Mère de Dieu dévoilés*, p. 311.
[2] She may have been born in 1706 or 1725. See Mathiez, *Histoire Religieuse de la Révolution*.

her body by wearing garters and bracelets with sharp iron points, for example. Then she fell to reading the Lives of St. Theresa and St. Catherine of Sienna. They proved fatal to the fleeting remnants of her reason. And now she became absolutely deranged. Henceforth she believed herself the mother or perhaps the bride of Christ. While the majority of priests discreetly avoided her, there were a few who were inclined to regard her as a prophetess. One of these was a constitutional priest, the Carthusian monk, Dom Gerle, who was a member of the Constituent Assembly. He and the fanatical Duchesse de Bourbon,[1] Egalité's sister, sat at Catherine's feet and formed the nucleus of a sect of mystics who soon gathered round her. At their meetings a scribe, Michael Hastain, wrote down Catherine's prophecies, which were generally concerned with the Second Coming of Christ; but, as they also predicted political happenings, Catherine, one day in December, 1779, found herself lodged in the Bastille. There she was kept for five weeks, then sent to a lunatic asylum for three years. In 1782, being pronounced sane, she was liberated, and for a while was cured of prophesying. But the Revolution again upset her. It seemed to her the fulfilment of all her predictions. Her hallucinations returned. She resumed her séances, first at the house of one of her numerous friends, Widow Godefroy, in la Rue des Rosières in the district known as le Marais,[2] and later near the Panthéon in la Rue Contrescarpe. Chaumette, when he became *Procureur* of the Commune, kept these meetings under observation. His spy, Senart, attended them regularly. He described them as liturgical in character. At one end of the room, he said,

[1] Louise Marie Thérèse Mathilde, Duchesse de Bourbon, born at Saint Cloud on the 9th of July, 1750, died at Paris 10th of January, 1822, the daughter of Louis Philippe d'Orléans, a grandson of the Regent.

[2] Lying behind the Faubourg St. Antoine and around la Place des Vosges.

was a platform, on which was Catherine Théot, seated in an armchair. On one side of her sat Dom Gerle, on the other, Widow Godefroy. The latter was the interpreter. To the faithful " brethren and sisters," as they called one another, who were seated on chairs some little distance from the platform, Mme Godefroy expounded the Gospels and the Apocalypse. Dom Gerle preached the sermon; and at intervals another woman intoned the Psalms. Catherine's part was to perform certain initiatory rites, which, however, were only introduced towards the end of 1793. The neophyte knelt before the prophetess while her interpreter clasped his head in her hands and said: " You are about to receive the seven seals of the light of God." Then Catherine herself bestowed on her disciple seven kisses, one on forehead, left cheek and both eyes, two on the chin and one behind the right ear. Initiatrice and initiated mutually signed one another on the face with the cross and kissed one another twice on the lips. One neurotic girl could with difficulty be torn away from these embraces. When Catherine's followers were ill, they came to her for healing, and she is said to have cured them of leprosy, blindness, lameness, paralysis and other maladies. Soldiers starting for the front came to Catherine for her blessing as a charm against death. Lovers thought she could secure them success in love. One disciple said he had seen the Divinity in a white robe conversing with his prophetess; another that, heralded by a flash of lightning, he had beheld God entering her house.

It is not surprising that in the height of the Terror, when suspicion ran riot, these séances were held to have a political meaning. Already, on the 15th of January, 1793, the Commune had ordered a raid on Catherine's house. At four o'clock in the morning three police inspectors had entered and carried off a bundle of papers. But they must have been disappointed to find that this packet contained nothing more compromising than Catherine's wild vaticinations

and comments on texts of the Bible which she had dictated to Hastain. The prophecies contained only two political allusions; and these could not have offended the most squeamish Republican, for they referred to the Revolution as having been foreordained through the centuries, and anathematised all nonjuring priests. Some of Catherine's comments on Holy Writ were not without a faint glimmering of common sense. Thus, dealing with the first chapter of Genesis and the text that in the beginning God created man in his own image, she exclaims, " and I, Catherine Théot, who speak to you, declare that God has not yet finished this work, that at present He is only at the sixth day, and that you are as yet not in His image at all, but in the womb of corrupt nature."

Despite the failure of this raid to discover any political plot at la Rue de Contrescarpe, the suspicious authorities were by no means convinced of its non-existence. The mystics were closely watched, first by the spies of Chaumette, and after his death by those of Vadier, a leading member of le Comité de Sûreté Générale and the sworn foe of Robespierre.

By the summer of 1794, a feud had declared itself between the two great revolutionary committees, Vadier's Sûreté Générale and le Salut Public, supported by Robespierre. Vadier conceived the idea of using the poor demented Catherine and her infatuated followers in his attack on Robespierre. What were the precise relations between Maximilien and Catherine will probably never be known. She may have introduced him by some flattering allusion into her wild prophecies; and Robespierre, puffed up with vanity and accustomed to being addressed by women as a demi-god, may not have objected. One coincidence has not, I think, so far been pointed out, viz., that Catherine resumed her prophesyings after the outbreak of the Revolution in a house in the Marais, and that she and Robespierre were then neighbours. Michelet suggests that Robespierre removed the

Théot dossier from the police archives. However that may be, he did not, perhaps he could not, intervene to prevent the arrest, on the 15th of June, 1794, of Catherine and Dom Gerle, on a charge of conspiring against the Republic. The absurd letter from Catherine to Robespierre, hailing him as her son, the promised Messiah, which Vadier said was found in the house at la Rue Contrescarpe, when Catherine was arrested, has been proved a forgery. Vadier was not incapable of forging the letter and having it concealed in the house by one of his subordinates. At that time, however, this letter was held to be genuine, and Vadier used it in the Convention to hold up Robespierre to that ridicule to which all Frenchmen are so exquisitely sensitive. This happened at a most unfortunate moment for Robespierre; for it was just at a time when the tide that was to overwhelm him on the 9th of Thermidor (July 27th) was turning against him. After a few months poor old Catherine died in prison, in September, 1794. Dom Gerle was released during the Directory.

Le temps était au fanatisme, says Michelet. Catherine Théot was by no means the only woman mystic of her day. There were prophetesses everywhere. Some claimed to have restored the dead to life. One near Lyons is said to have gathered round her no less than a hundred thousand persons with pilgrim's staves in their hands ready to follow her, they knew not whither.

Another of these prophetesses with whom Robespierre's name also came to be associated, was Suzette Labrousse.[1] She was born near Vauxain, in Périgord, on the 8th of May, 1747. Her childhood was passed in fits of ecstasy. She could never look at a crucifix without bursting into tears. In extreme youth she believed herself divinely called to become a saint and a prophetess. She was a pretty girl, but the admira-

[1] Clotilde Suzanne Courcelles de Labrousse.

tion her good looks excited annoyed her so much that she endeavoured, with incomplete success apparently, to destroy her complexion by rubbing quick lime over her face at night. Indeed, Suzanne, like Catherine, was ingenious in inventing punishments for her poor body: she wore a hair shirt, tried to poison herself by eating spiders, mixed gall with her food, and slept on pebbles. Like Joan of Arc, she heard heavenly voices. They bade her reform the Church and drag down the mighty from their seats. As early as 1779 she prophesied that the Pope would lose his temporal power, the French clergy their property, and that peace would reign among nations. It is hardly surprising that, much to her annoyance, the clergy of her native province refused to take her seriously. The credulous Dom Gerle, however, heard of her prophecies, among which, so he used to say, was a prediction that he would one day sit in the Assembly of the States-General. The fanatical monk determined not to lose sight of so promising a fellow-mystic. He remained in constant correspondence with Labrousse until the outbreak of the Revolution. After the establishment of the national church by the Constituent Assembly, the juring priests, whose attention had been called to Suzette's prophecies by Dom Gerle, began to take an interest in her. One of them, Pontard, Bishop of the Dordogne Department, encouraged her to go to Paris. She went, tramping barefoot all the way from Périgord. At Paris, in 1791, the Duchesse de Bourbon, ever on the look-out for curiosities in the way of religion, received Suzette into her house, and introduced her to a number of juring priests and bishops, among whom were the famous Fauchet[1] and Desbois, Bishop of Amiens. To the robust sense of Fauchet and Desbois she was a lunatic. But Pontard and others continued to believe in her. In the following year the Bishop of Dordogne founded a newspaper,

[1] See *ante*, p. 92.

entitled *le Journal Prophétique*,[1] which contained little besides the predictions of *la Pythonesse Périgourdine*, as the editor styled her.

Meanwhile Suzette's voices were telling her to go to Rome, there to deal faithfully with the Holy Father. She had already, so she said long afterwards, entered into communication with Robespierre,[2] who had confided to her that one day he would be compelled to restore the religion he was then striving to destroy, and on that day he would look to Suzette to help him. Though no credence can be attached to such a story, there seems little doubt[3] that in 1792 the constitutional clergy did actually entertain a hope that Labrousse might be able to persuade the Pope to give his sanction to the lately established national church. With the object of inquiring into the matter, seven constitutional bishops assembled on the 19th of February, 1792, and summoned Suzette before them. She came, accompanied of course by her hostess, the Duchesse de Bourbon; and equally of course, intent on displaying her prophetical gifts before so august an assembly of the constitutional hierarchy. She predicted the resurrection of the Dauphin, Louis XVI.'s eldest son, who had died at the beginning of the Revolution, and of Mirabeau. On being asked when the resurrections would take place, she replied, "Soon." When urged to be more explicit, she was wisely silent. On the inquiry as to whether it would be within three or four months, she equivocally nodded her head. Not even such marvels availed to remove the doubts of Fauchet and Desbois; but the remaining prelates were unanimous in deciding to appoint Labrousse their ambassador to the Holy See. Before starting on her mission, she took Holy Communion at the church of les Filles-Saint-Thomas, again accompanied by la Duchesse de Bourbon.

[1] See Mathiez, op. cit., p. 104.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

On her way to Rome Suzette preached in churches, clubs and by the road-side, addressing her audiences as "Friends and Brethren," in the manner of the orators at the Jacobin Club. At Bologna, after undergoing a cross-examination by the papal legate, she was driven from the town.[1] At Viterbo, she was arrested. Consequently it was as a prisoner that she finally reached Rome and the Castle of St. Angelo, which was to be her abode for the next six years. The Directory demanded her release in vain. Not until the French troops occupied Rome in 1798 did she regain her freedom. Then at length the exile returned to France and to Paris, only to find that *le temps n'était plus au fanatisme* and that the only course open to a prophetess was to subside into obscurity, especially after the year 1799, which she had predicted was to see the end of the world.

Suzette lived on until 1821. On her death she left Pontard her executor and the sole legatee of her little fortune of three thousand francs. Suzette's family disputed the will, but apparently without success. Pontard, who had been diligent in publishing his friend's writings during her life-time—an edition of her collected works, chiefly prophecies, had appeared at Bordeaux in 1797—does not appear to have published anything after her death. But, as we have said, *le temps n'était plus au fanatisme.*

We have seen in this chapter many types of feminine religious mentality, ranging from the Protestant Mme de Staël, the philosophic Mme Roland, the doubting Lucile Desmoulins, to the credulous Duchesse de Bourbon and the hysterical fanatics Catherine Théot and Suzette Labrousse.

But in all their divergencies these varying types are united by one common bond, by one passionate sentiment which amounted to a religion—love of their

[1] *Biographie Générale*, under "Labrousse, Clotilde-Suzanne Courcelles de."

native land. This was the sentiment that possessed revolutionary women as well as men, Christians, Deists, Atheists, all alike. The Revolution, like every other great movement, had its self-seekers, its miserable speculators and profiteers and persons bent only on their own personal advancement. But the names of these egoists are not those which are most remembered.

The leading women in this book, even the two poor hallucinated women whose stories we have just told, had a sense of national solidarity. Many of the women, like their masculine fellow-workers, made hideous blunders; they allowed themselves to be blinded by suspicion; and some of them committed serious crimes against humanity. But they did it all in the cause they believed to be their country's. They deserved to be called patriots, and this was the title of all others that they honoured most. They had at least reached one stage in the road that leads to ideals wider and nobler than many of them even imagined.

CHAPTER X

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WOMEN'S PARTY

"Though few, we hold a promise for the race
That was not at our rising; you are free
To win brave mates; you lose but marionnettes.
He who's for us, for him are we."

—*George Meredith.*

HITHERTO we have seen the women of the Revolution battling for progress in general, either side by side with men or apart in their own separate fields. We have seen men politicians making use of women in various ways to further the general cause of the Revolution. But we should have a false impression of the women of the Revolution were we to think of them as so completely occupied with the common weal as to be indifferent to the weal of their own sex in particular. Though the word *feminism* was not coined until after the Revolution,[1] woman's struggle for emancipation went on through the Revolution, and had begun long before it.

From the Middle Ages onwards there had been Feminists in France—Christine de Pisan, Marguerite de Valois, Mlle de Gournay, la Grande Mademoiselle, Mme de Lambert—but not until the Revolution had there been a distinct Feminist Movement; not until men began to combine to demand recognition of the Rights of Man, did women begin to combine to demand that the rights of men should include those of women.

"It was in the eighteenth century, the seed-time

[1] By Fourier in his *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements*, published in 1808.

of modern ideas," writes Mr. Havelock Ellis,[1] "that our great-grandfathers became conscious of a discordant break in the traditional conceptions of woman's status. The vague cries of justice, freedom, equality, which were being hurled about the world, were here and there energetically applied to women."

In France, throughout the century, philosophers with the exception of that arch anti-Feminist, Jean Jacques Rousseau, had been sowing the seed of Revolutionary Feminism as well as of much else.[2] "In the customs of all lands," wrote Diderot, "nature's cruelty to women has been reinforced by the cruelty of the common law." "In marriage, man unjustly arrogates to himself a proprietorial right over his wife." Montesquieu and Voltaire were both in favour of giving women political rights. So were D'Alembert, Beaumarchais, and Mercier.

Thus towards the end of the century, Feminism was in the air. In England, two years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, Mary Wollstonecraft published the first of her Feminist books: *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, to be succeeded five years later by her great work, *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which was immediately translated into French. In Germany, Kant's friend, Theodore Gottlich von Himmel, was preparing his two Feminist treatises, *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* and *Ueber Weibliche Bildung*, which appeared respectively in 1792 and 1801. Meanwhile, in France, the last of the philosophers, Condorcet, was surpassing in zeal and persistence all these advocates of Feminism. We have already seen Condorcet and his wife in their salon at l'Hôtel des Monnaies including woman's political

[1] *Women and Marriage*, p. 7.

[2] See Lèon Abensour, *Histoire Générale du Féminisme des Origines à nos Jours* (Paris, Delagrave, 1921), p. 168. M. Abensour will shortly publish a work on the Origins of Revolutionary Feminism.

enfranchisement among the ideals which their friends despised as Utopian. It was in the year before the Revolution that Condorcet, in the second of his *Lettres d'un Bourgeois de Newhaven à un Citoyen de Virginie*, demanded that women should not merely vote but be eligible for election to governing bodies. In the following year he returned to the same theme in an *Essai sur la Constitution et les Fonctions des Assemblées Provinciales*, and again in the next year in an article *Sur l'Admission des Femmes au Droit de Cité*,[1] contributed to the Journal of "La Société de 1789." Later, in his classic work *le Tableau des Progrés de l'Esprit Humain* he laid down as a necessary condition of intellectual progress "the complete destruction of prejudices which have created a legal inequality between the two sexes, fatal even to those whom it favours."[2]

The most revolutionary of his demands, that women should not only vote, but be eligible for election to governing bodies, was made in the earliest of these works. In the matter of suffrage, Condorcet was a very moderate reformer: all he demanded, both for men and women, was a slight extension of a very restricted property qualification. For we must remember that when the Revolution opened, women were not entirely debarred from voting. Ever since the institution of the States-General by Philippe le Bel, in 1302, certain women had possessed this privilege and had from time to time made use of it. Now when the States-General, after a lapse of one hundred and seventy-five years, were once more summoned by a royal decree, a clause in that decree called upon all women, lay or religious, who held seigniorial fiefs, to appoint proxies, chosen from the nobility in the case of lay-women, from the clergy in the case of nuns, to represent them in the

[1] A translation of this article may be found in the Appendix to the volume of *Miscellanies* by Lord Morley, which contains his Essay on Condorcet.

[2] Condorcet, *Œuvres Complètes Tableau des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*, p. 367.

electoral colleges.[1] Women complied. Consequently certain members of the National Assembly owed their election partly to women's votes.

This, according to Condorcet, was quite right and proper; the injustice lay, he contended, in the article he contributed to the Journal of the 1789 Society, in limiting the right of representation to the women who held seigniorial fiefs. Condorcet would have it extended to the feminine holders of territorial fiefs.

It is not the advocacy of this very modest measure of reform, but the revolutionary nature of the arguments by which he supported it that entitles Condorcet to rank with John Stuart Mill as one of the greatest advocates of women suffrage. With Condorcet's reasoning, striking and novel as it was in his day, we are now so familiar that there is no need to repeat it here. Yet hardly any of his men contemporaries agreed with him. Among prominent politicians only the Abbé Sieyès, the diplomatist Talleyrand, and the scientist Romme advocated women's suffrage.

But the women who demanded the political enfranchisement of their sex were more numerous. They were led by four fiery agitators, with whom we are already well acquainted: Etta Palm von Ælders, Olympe de Gouges, Théroigne de Méricourt, and Claire Lacombe. Probably none of them, except perhaps Etta Palm, had ever read a line of Condorcet's writings. They would have had no patience with his moderate and aristocratic notions, for each member of the quartette at one time or other[2] claimed what is known in France to-day as *le suffrage intégral*. Etta Palm was the most moderate of the four. For that reason, and also because she was the first to disappear from the Revolution scene, we will take her first,

[1] See Aulard, *La Revue Bleue*, March, 1898, *Le Féminisme pendant le Révolution.*

[2] Etta Palm not always as we shall see *post*, p. 243.

although she was not the first to begin Feminist propaganda.

Etta Palm, or Mme d'Ælders, as we have said in a previous chapter,[1] was an influential member of the Club, known as "the Friends of Truth" or the "Social Circle," founded in 1790. There, and owing largely, no doubt, to the fact that Condorcet was a member, women's rights and wrongs were frequently discussed. But the speakers were not always Feminist. On the 31st of October, 1790, one speaker enunciated the familiar doctrine that a woman's sphere is bounded by the walls of her home. There, he said, is woman's throne. There she is surrounded by her children, who should be her only glory. Then with the Revolutionist's unfailing appeal to the annals of Rome, "Cornelia," he concluded, "was neither senator, nor consul, nor general of the Roman armies, she was the mother of the Gracchi."[2]

But Anti-Feminists were, of course, not allowed the last word at the Social Circle. A few weeks later it was announced that on the 26th of November a young man, Charles Louis Rousseau, a former *député extraordinaire* for Chablis and Tonnerre, would speak on the following points: (1) do women exercise any influence over government? (2) how best can that influence be used for the good of the state? (3) in a properly constituted state what should be the social and political position of woman? (4) a proposal to create magisterial functions exclusively exercisable by women.[3] Every care was taken to ensure Rousseau a large and influential audience. The Club's newspaper, *Bouche de Fer*,[4] announced that not only members of the Social Circle, but members of the Constituent Assembly, the Paris Municipality, and of other clubs, the Jacobins, "les Electeurs Patriotes"

[1] *Ante*, pp. 100 *et seq.*
[2] Aulard, *La Revue Bleue*, March, 1898, *art. cit.*
[3] Villiers, op. cit., p. 16.
[4] See *ante*, p. 92.

and " les Electeurs de 1789 " would be admitted on producing their cards. In spite of all these carefully planned arrangements, the meeting resulted in a complete fiasco, and would have covered Feminism with ridicule had it not been for the intervention of a clever woman in the audience.

Rousseau was a dapper little man, well powdered, with a fine tricolour cockade in his hat and another at the hilt of his sword; but he was utterly ignorant of the art of speaking in public. In vain did his women friends, by their vociferous applause, endeavour to inspire him with the eloquence he lacked. Rousseau maundered on interminably, until the women who were not his personal admirers and the whole male portion of the assembly were bored to extinction and tried, but in vain, to cry him down. " Shall he continue? " inquired the embarrassed President, one Dr Michel. " Yes, yes," shouted the speaker's women friends. But renewed frequent and forcible interruptions from the rest of the audience finally reduced even the persistent Rousseau to unwilling silence.

As at long last he ceased speaking, a tall and well-dressed woman emerged from the seats in the amphitheatre reserved for her sex, and mounting the platform, protested against the disgraceful treatment accorded to the champion of women's rights. " I demand," she cried, " in the name of every citizenness present that the speaker be allowed to continue." But by that time the President had adjourned the meeting, and there remained nothing for the women to do but to gather round the oratress, to smother her with embraces, and to overwhelm her with their thanks and congratulations.

This brave champion of her sex was none other than Etta Palm d'Ælders. Etta had so fascinated the Social Circle that the Club insisted on her fixing a day when she would address them at greater length. They even wanted to make her President. Only the

former request was granted: Etta was persuaded to name the day, it was to be the 30th of December.

In the interval, the silenced, but by no means discomfited, Rousseau, insisted on completing his oration at the Paris Vauxhall on the 13th of December; and to guard against interruption this time he refused to admit to the hall any man for whose orderly behaviour a woman would not hold herself responsible. This plan was apparently successful, and Rousseau was allowed to drone on as long as he liked, and to weary his listeners without interruption.

Etta's triumph on the 30th was as brilliant as Rousseau's failure had been dismal. "O ye gods and goddesses," had cried another Teuton, Anacharsis Clootz, "behold the divine Hypatia herself on the platform." But Mme d'Ælders was too mistrustful of her Dutch accent to deliver her own speech; it was read for her by one of the Club's secretaries: and for the defects of its composition the writer felt it necessary to apologise. "Born and bred in a foreign land," she began, "if the construction of my phrases is not according to the rules of the French Academy, I ask you to believe that I have consulted my heart rather than a dictionary." The audience was ready to make every allowance.

The speech was received with immense applause. It was printed at the Club's expense and, with other subsequent speeches by Mme d'Ælders, was circulated throughout France under the title of *Appel aux Françaises sur la Régénération des Mœurs, et Nécessité de l'Influence des Femmes dans un Government Libre.*

The women of Creil responded to this appeal by electing its author a member of the recently formed women's section of the national guard, and presenting her, some say with a sword of honour, but at any rate with one of the national medals struck to commemorate the Feast of the Federation.

With much pomp and ceremony the formal

presentation was made in the amphitheatre of the Palais Royal, by the Commander of the Creil National Guard, in the name of the captainess and members of the Women's Section and of the Municipal Council of Creil. In acknowledging the honour conferred upon her, Mme d'Ælders proposed that a statue to Phocion's wife should be erected in the amphitheatre in order that the members of the Club might have constantly before their eyes a model of wisdom, modesty, and every moral and civic virtue. The President of the Club, not to be outdone in heroics, rejoined that never would the Male Friends of Truth consent to wear chains save chains of flowers woven by Etta's hands or those of her amiable fellow-workers.

As to the speech itself, though it was embroidered with many a flower of rhetoric, if any convinced suffragists heard it, their hearts must have been left cold.

Much was said about the reform of women's morals: they were adjured to adorn their heads with crowns of *civisme* instead of with pompons and other frivolous ornaments. But women's influence on government, which was supposed to be the main theme of the discourse, was left almost unnoticed. Suffragists must have been disappointed when, after speaking of the injustice of women's position in the family and society, the speaker conceded that for the present anything like equality between the sexes was out of the question. This must be postponed until another Revolution. For the present women must concentrate on moral progress, on winning educational advantages, on making themselves worthy to be the companions of men.[1] Any Anti-feminist might have said as much, and did, as we shall see when we come to the Anti-feminism of Mme Roland.

However, with the exception of M. and Mme Condorcet, there were probably few, if any, suffragists

[1] Adrien Lasserre, op. cit., p. 23.

belonging to the Social Circle. Consequently, Mme d'Ælders enjoyed her triumph undisturbed, and she lived up to her opportunity. The fame she had already acquired as a platform woman made her as eager as all the other oratresses of the Revolution to display her eloquence to the best advantage, i.e., in the presence of the National Assembly.

On the 23rd of March, 1791, she proposed, apparently in vain, to the women of the Social Circle that they should go in a body to thank the National Assembly for having granted women *une existence civile*.[1] A year later she was more successful; and on the 1st of April, 1792, she actually found herself playing the coveted part, and appearing at the head of a deputation before the Legislative Assembly. This time she came out as a real suffragist. Not content with asking for equality of educational opportunities, she demanded equal political rights for women and men, majority for women at twenty-one instead of at twenty-five, and the right to divorce. The reply of the President of the Assembly was the perfection of *la galanterie française*. He promised that in the future the Assembly would avoid passing any laws which should cause women citizens to shed tears or displease them in any way. He granted the petitioners the honours of the sitting and referred their petition to the Committee on Legislation and Education, in whose pigeon-holes it was no doubt safely buried.

This was probably one of Mme d'Ælders' last appearances in public. By that time the Social Circle had ceased to exist, and soon the Patriotic and Philanthropic Ladies also were to discontinue their meetings. The fact is that Mme d'Ælders was now growing unpopular. It had been whispered that she was a spy in the service of the hated King of Prussia. His Ambassador, it was said, had been seen

[1] Referring probably to their decree establishing equality of inheritance between men and women. Aulard, *Le Féminisme pendant la Révolution, art. cit.*

visiting her flat. The report would seem to have originated with Mme Robert, who made it a pretext for opposing Mme d'Ælders' election to the Jacobin Fraternal Society. Mme Robert's real reason was jealousy: being the chief speaker at the Society, she feared Etta as a rival. The French Government of the day can hardly have taken the rumour seriously, seeing that in September, 1792, Lebrun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent Etta to Holland to inquire whether the Republic of the United Provinces would be willing to receive an Ambassador from the new Republic of France. The failure of Mme d'Ælders in this important mission closed her public career. Whether she ever returned to France is uncertain. At any rate, she was treated as an *émigrée*; the property she had left in Paris was confiscated, and the contents of her flat in la Rue Favart placed under seal. In the inventory of her furniture figure a bust of Camille Desmoulins, a great many corsets, and four porcelain dolls.

Whether Mme d'Ælders was a Prussian spy or not, as a Feminist we suspect her of being a trimmer, ready to advocate women's suffrage when, as at the time of her petition to the Assembly, the idea was growing popular, but equally ready to adjourn the reform indefinitely when she was addressing an audience with whom the measure was unlikely to find favour. If, during the first three years of the Revolution, the idea of women's parliamentary enfranchisement gained ground, it certainly was not due to the advocacy of Mme d'Ælders.

There was a woman, however, who, though she changed her mind from time to time as to some articles of her political creed, remained from first to last, and was, even before the Revolution, a stalwart and loyal suffragist: this woman was Olympe de Gouges. Michelet calls her "the high priestess of Feminism." She was the first of the Revolution women to organise an orderly Feminist manifestation. Hardly had the

National Assembly taken up its quarters at Paris, in the Riding School of the Rue St. Honoré, when, on the 28th of October, 1789, Olympe, at the head of a deputation of women, laid before the deputies a programme of Feminist reform, such as—with one exception—might well be urged to-day by Maria Vérone or any other leader of the women's party in France. It included complete sex equality before the law; the admission of women to all occupations for which they were fitted; the suppression of what was called the dowry system; and then came that touch of eccentricity, or shall we say utopianism, that rendered so many of Olympe's proposals impracticable. If the dowry system must remain, said she, then let the State provide husbands for girls who were without dowries. In conclusion, Olympe, with the usual flourish, asked "why women, who from the sceptre to the crook are born to scatter flowers over men's lives, should receive from them in return nothing but chains, torment, and injustice."

In those early days, we may be sure, the Assembly listened patiently to Olympe's declamation. "She would have spoken well," said one of her hearers, "if only she had not so many fireworks in her brain." As time went on the Assembly grew less patient, for Olympe never lost an opportunity of displaying her eloquence before them; and at the same time, as we have seen,[1] she was pouring forth innumerable pamphlets and posting many of them on the hoardings of Paris. Feminism figured large in many of these pronouncements. Like Mme d'Ælders, Olympe, who was self-educated as far as she was educated at all, desired for her fellow-women advantages that had never been hers. She demanded that girls should receive the same education as boys, that all careers should be open to women, who, with a wider outlook, would acquit themselves better of their domestic

[1] See *ante*, p. 166.

duties. While she would have all the political privileges that men enjoyed extended to women, she further demanded that in certain directions women should acquire peculiar privileges of their own: that of the theatre for example; she advocated the establishment of a national theatre in which only plays by women should be acted. Here we catch the personal note that was never far to seek in Olympe's propaganda. She had suffered, as we have seen, from the refusal of her plays by la Comédie Française and other Paris theatres. She is said to have taken one of her productions, *l'Esclavage des Nègres*, to London; but there she had no better success than in Paris. That is by the way, however. But to return to her Feminism. *A outrance*, as it was, it did not blind her to the faults of her sex. As denunciatory as a Hebrew prophet, preaching at everyone, as we have said[1]—at the King, the Queen, the Assembly, the Clubs, especially the Jacobins—she did not fail to deal faithfully, even brutally, with her fellow-women. "In France especially, for many centuries," she wrote, "women have done more harm than good. For the French Government has almost always depended on *l'administration nocturne des femmes*." If in public women have no political power, *elles commandent despotiquement dans le mystère*. Such frankness as this Olympe justified by saying, "I serve my sex by persecuting it." But all the faults of women—their ineffectuality, their sloth, their coquetry—this Feminist laid at men's door.

To the lowest class of her fellow-women she showed no pity whatever. In order that honest women and their daughters should not be horrified by so vile a spectacle, as was too often seen in the Paris streets, Olympe would sweep prostitutes[2] off the public

[1] *Ante*, p. 107.

[2] For prostitutes and prostitution during the Revolution see De Goncourt, *La Civilisation Française pendant la Révolution*, p. 374.

thoroughfares and shut them up in separate quarters, belonging to the State and under police supervision.

The most celebrated of all her Feminist tracts, the one which more than any other entitles her to be regarded as the foundress of modern Feminism, is her "Declaration of the Rights of Women," contained in a pamphlet addressed to the Queen, and published in September, 1791. In the opening paragraph, Marie Antoinette was implored to win the gratitude of one half of her subjects and at least a third of the other half by declaring herself the protectress of her sex and by furthering the recognition of their lawful rights. The Declaration contains seventeen clauses. In the first, following the same form as the Declaration of the Rights of Man, it opens by declaring that woman is born free, then it adds, and "equal in rights to man." Social distinctions can only be based on common utility. The principle of sovereignty resides in the nation, which consists of men as well as of women. Laws should express the general will. Citizenesses as well as citizens should have a share in framing them, either directly or through their representatives. The law should be equal for all. Citizenesses, like citizens, being equal in its eyes, should be equally eligible for all public dignities, posts, and employments, according to their capacity and without any distinction save that of their virtues and talents. Women as well as men pay taxes. Consequently women as well as men have the right to call to account the public servants whom they pay.

There is nothing in these principles which would not be accepted by the average woman suffragist of to-day. Few suffragists, however, indeed few social reformers, would agree with the clauses which follow, and which deal with marriage and children. Still smarting under the wrongs, real or imaginery, of her childhood, believing herself to have been an illegitimate child and consequently deprived of what should have been her lawful inheritance, Olympe propounded

a new marriage system, *le Contrat Social de l'Homme et de la Femme*. It is one of her most whimsical and impracticable schemes. The contracting parties were to hold their property in common, with the reservation that it could be divided in favour of children who might be born *d'une inclination particulière*. "Mutually agreeing," concludes this strange proposal, "that our property belongs to our children, *de quelque lit qu'ils sortent*, and that all alike, without distinction, have the right to bear the name of the father and mother who have recognised them." No one, as far as we know, ever took this scheme seriously. While retaining the institution of marriage, Olympe would reduce it to an absurdity. This was precisely the treatment that Olympe was soon to accuse the Legislative Assembly of having meted out to the monarchy. Of the monarchy she said justly: "It would have been better to abolish it rather than to drag it in the mud."

It is in Article X of the Declaration of the Rights of Women that occurs the famous phrase that even those who know nothing else about her always associate with Olympe: "woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she should also have the right to mount the platform."[1]

Among all the rights Olympe demanded for women, those two were the only ones that she herself ever exercised.[2]

The pity that Olympe refused to the fallen members of her own sex, we have already seen her lavishing heroically on the deposed King. In a previous chapter[3] we left her on the eve of her arrest, the inevitable consequence of her quixotic offer to defend Louis Capet at his trial. Had anything else

[1] *La femme a le droit de monter à l'échafaud: elle doit avoir également celui de monter à la tribune.*

[2] Olympe was not a club woman as some have maintained. Most of her speeches were made at the head of deputations to the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies.

[3] *Ante*, pp. 168-71.

been necessary to render her condemnation inevitable she supplied it by her frequent attacks on Robespierre, whom she described as a perpetual disgrace to the Revolution, and by her espousal of the lost cause of La Gironde. "It is my nature," she had written, "to be on the side of the weak and the oppressed."[1]

On the 20th of July, 1793, while instructing a bill-poster as to the posting up of her latest pamphlet, *Les Trois Urnes ou le Salut de la Patrie,* Olympe was arrested in la Rue de Harlay. She was taken to the nearest Mairie, there interrogated and detained. Among the formal charges brought against her was the publication of a seditious play *la France Sauvée ou le Tyran Détrôné* and three pamphlets, of which the most serious was *les Trois Urnes,*[2] which proposed that the people should choose by a plebiscite between the Republican Government, one and indivisible, a Federative Government and a Monarchy. To profess or even to suggest "Federalism," as it was called, was then regarded as a crime of the deepest dye, as many Girondists knew to their cost.

For three months Olympe was taken from prison to prison, from the Mairie to l'Abbaye, from l'Abbaye to La Force, then to a private hospital, and thence to that vestibule of death, la Conciergerie.

All the time she was pouring forth letters and pamphlets, continuing her attacks on Robespierre and the Jacobin Club, which she called "a den of thieves," and writing to the son who was to deny and to censure her as "a conspirator who had forgotten the virtues becoming to her sex." Olympe made her will in prison, her fortune—all that was left of fifty thousand francs in investment and furniture, valued at thirty thousand—she bequeathed to this ungrateful son. Her heart she left to her country, "her honesty to men (if they needed it), her soul to women."

[1] Not always, as we have seen in the case of prostitutes.

[2] See Wallon, *Histoire du Tribunal Révolutionnaire de Paris,* vol. II, pp. 170-71.

On the 2nd of November she was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The advocate who should have defended her was not present. The Tribunal refused to allow her to appoint another. She therefore conducted her own defence, and, as we might expect, with great eloquence. Writing to her son, she said: "Twenty times did I chase the blood from the cheeks of my executioners." That was, of course, her habitual exaggeration. But it was true that she won the sympathy of the audience and made a great impression on her judges. As the sentence was about to be pronounced, she cried: "My enemies will not have the triumph of seeing my blood flow: I am pregnant and shall present the Republic with a citizen or citizeness." The sentence was stayed until the next day, when, after examining the accused, a surgeon pronounced her statement to be incorrect.

Psychologists tell us that in all human beings there are masculine and feminine elements. Olympe had many masculine qualities; but during the final hours of her life her femininity had come out strong, for her last request had been for a mirror; and, gazing on her face for the last time, she had cried: "Ah! thank heaven! my face is not playing me any tricks. I am not too pale." Not long before her death Olympe had written of herself: "My first impulse is like a tempest . . . but as soon as the explosion is over, my mind is perfectly calm." All Olympe's explosions were now over. On the 4th of November, 1793, she went out into the eternal calm.

As she was going up the steps to the guillotine, the executioner, as was his wont, put out his hand to help her. "I forbid you to touch me," cried Olympe, "except to cut off my head." Then having reached the platform, she said: "I wanted to be somebody. Alas for that fatal desire for renown."[1]

Feminism, like every other creed, is coloured by

[1] See Jourdan, *Les Femmes devant l'Echafand*, p. 185.

the temperament of the man or woman that professes it. We have seen certain phases of Olympe's Feminism proceeding from her vanity and ambition. We shall also discern the personal note in the Feminism of Théroigne, which we are now to consider. Théroigne was essentially a man's woman; and it was only when her attractiveness to men began to wane that her Feminism developed. But even then she continued to seek men's society; for Théroigne, like that other great Feminist, Georges Sand, frankly confessed that she disliked women, Frenchwomen at any rate—"*je n'aime pas les femmes françeses*," she said with her Flemish accent. It was through men that in the beginning she strove to realise her Feminist aims. Early in 1790 she founded a men's club, "les Amis de la Loi," comprising a dozen or more members, who, for a few weeks—it had only twenty meetings in all—gathered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at her house, l'Hôtel de Grenoble, Rue Bouloy; and there women's rights were frequently discussed.

During the early months of 1790, when Théroigne was not at this or some other club, she was attending the debates of the Assembly.[1] There, when on the 4th of February the King announced his adhesion to the Constitution, men and women, and Théroigne among the latter, swore allegiance to the new régime. Shortly afterwards, somewhere between the 20th and the 25th of the month, Théroigne having once been allowed to make her voice heard in the councils of the State, proposed to go a step further and, at the close of her famous speech at the Cordeliers,[2] asked for a consultative vote in that Assembly. But then, despite the applause that had greeted her speech, she suffered one of those rebuffs which are partly accountable for the bitterness and extravagance of her later career. The reply of the Assembly of the Cordeliers District

[1] See Lacour, op. cit., pp. 190-91, and Pellet, op. cit., p. 37 *et seq.*

[2] See *ante*, pp. 89-91.

to Théroigne's request is significant. According to Camille Desmoulins, who related the incident in his newspaper, *les Révolutions de France et de Brabant*,[1] the Assembly, after thanking the citizeness for her proposal voted, on the motion of the President, the following resolution: "Seeing that a canon of the Council of Mâcon[2] has formally recognised that women, like men, possess a soul and an intelligence (*une âme et la raison*) women cannot be denied the right to make such good use of them as the previous speaker has done. Mlle Théroigne and other members of her sex will always be free to propose anything that seems to them for the good of their country. But, as to the question of status, as to whether the Demoiselle Théroigne shall be admitted to the meeting of the District with a consultative vote, the Assembly is incompetent to take any decision; and the discussion is closed." In other words, women may freely use for the good of the State the powers of which a Council of the Church grudgingly admitted them to be possessed. There was no reason, for example, why *les citoyens* should not arm *les citoyennes*, as they inaccurately termed the women of France, with daggers against the enemies of the Revolution, why they should not form them into a bodyguard to protect Robespierre. But, when it came to admitting the so-called *citoyennes* even into the outer court of citizenship, to giving one of them even so much as a consultative voice in a district council, no, that could not be tolerated, for it constituted an infringement of man's political monopoly; and so fundamental an innovation was not for one moment to be thought of. If this was the masculine attitude towards so very moderate a Feminist demand in the early and comparatively Feminist days of the Revolu-

[1] No. XIV.

[2] The actual question by no means unanimously settled in the affirmative was, "Is woman a member of the human race?" See *ante*, p. 86, n. 2.

tion, there was little chance later when, as we shall see, the Government's policy became decidedly Anti-feminist, that much more aspiring demands would be granted.

In the two years that followed, Théroigne received many an ovation. But I doubt whether she ever completely recovered from the disappointment of that first refusal. Her greatest triumph was that we have already described at the Jacobin Club.[1] This was after her return from Austria in January, 1792. Théroigne then became a person of considerable importance. Her salon in la Rue de Tournon was frequented by all that was most distinguished in revolutionary society. On patriotic playing-cards Théroigne's picture figured as the Queen of Spades, with the Duke of Orléans as King and Santerre as knave. In the Palais Royal Gardens, and in the café d'Hottot on the Feuillants Terrace, her word was law; and at a gesture from her, shopkeepers were constrained to remove from their windows pictures she considered to be reactionary. She took part in the first invasion of the Tuileries, on the 20th of June.

By this time, however, signs were not wanting that her popularity was on the wane. On the 4th of March, in an interminable speech at the Jacobin Club, in which she proposed to raise public spirit to "its proper height" (*à sa juste hauteur*), Théroigne succeeded in lowering the spirits of her hearers. On the 13th of April occurred that stormy debate in the Club, when, as we have seen, she was accused of raising a riot in the Faubourg St. Antoine.[2] Whether or no Théroigne was to blame in that matter, there is no doubt she was becoming more and more violent and losing her balance. Probably this arose partly from the growth of the malady which was finally to deprive her of her reason. Meanwhile, as her attractiveness faded, she began to neglect her personal appearance.

[1] *Ante*, pp. 85-86.
[2] See *ante*, p. 104.

She was getting to look emaciated, worn and haggard. A Royalist who knew her at this time described her as the living image of the Revolution; brilliant in its beginning, fanatical in the middle, and revolting and sanguinary after the 10th of August.

On that day, armed with pistols and a dagger, wearing her usual riding habit, this time of blue, and, a black hat with black feathers, says one eye-witness, with tricolour says another, she was up betimes and early at the Feuillants Monastery, where the first prisoners were being brought in. As to what then happened there has been much discussion. Early historians accused her of having with her own hands slain one of the prisoners, Suleau, the editor of the reactionary newspaper *les Actes des Apôtres*, which had made the most scurrilous attacks upon her. Later authorities acquit her of such a crime.

Exasperated at the sight of this well-known reactionary, Théroigne may have clamoured for his death. She may even have laid hands on him herself. But Suleau quickly found himself struggling with several assailants. He had been disarmed, but he seized the sword of one of his captors, and fought for his life. But what was one against so many? He was overpowered, dragged out into the courtyard, and there put to death with that animal savagery, which, as we know too well, revolutions seem to engender.

That Théroigne should have been in any way implicated in this incident is terrible enough, and one is glad to find the even more horrible charge groundless.[1] Equally groundless was the assertion that Théroigne took part in the Prison Massacres of September.[2] No contemporary authority mentions her among the perpetrators of those assassinations, indeed she seems to have protested against them.

[1] The matter is fully discussed by Michelet, op. cit., p. 97; Pellet, op. cit., p. 96; Lacour, op. cit., p. 282-83.

[2] Lacour's evidence on this point, see op. cit., p. 288, is convincing.

They were the work of the Jacobin Party, to which she was now so strongly opposed that she was called "Brissotine" and "Anti-Robespierriste."

Robespierre had travelled far since the day when at Arras he had charmed Mlle de Keralio by desiring that men and women should work in double harness. Robespierre had now become as inveterate an Anti-feminist as his master, Rousseau.

Collot d'Herbois raised the laugh against Théroigne when in her presence at the Jacobin Club, with mock regret, he said he had heard Théroigne declaring that she must withdraw her friendship from him and from Robespierre. Théroigne, infuriated, leapt from her seat on to the platform and clamoured to be allowed to speak. Such an uproar followed that the President put on his hat, thus signifying the adjournment of the meeting.

Théroigne was at this time living close to the Jacobins, at 273 Rue St. Honoré, where she held a salon, and whence she continued to carry on her Feminist propaganda. Like Olympe she had her manifestoes posted on the hoardings. One of these exists to-day in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Printed on grey paper, it is an appeal to the forty-eight Sections of Paris, each to nominate from among the worthiest and the most highly respected women of the Section, six whose duty it should be to remind the citizens of the dangers threatening the country, of the necessity of maintaining order and liberty of opinion. These reminders were indeed becoming more and more necessary every day; and none had more need of them than Théroigne. But she herself was soon to fall a victim of that anarchy against which she was protesting.

In the quarrel between the Jacobins and the Girondins, which reached its climax in the May of this year (1793), the former had not hesitated to employ against their political enemies, *les tricoteuses, les poissardes* and the lowest women of the streets. The

most disreputable of these women roughs, said to be in the pay of the Jacobins, used to surge in angry mobs on the Feuillants Terrace and round the doors of the Assembly. There they refused to allow any to enter who were not of their own particular brand of political opinion. It had long been the custom of these fearsome mænads publicly to flog in the most humiliating manner any of their number whose views or whose conduct displeased them. The prints of the period represent many such scenes, which even our Gillray might hesitate to depict. Théroigne had protested against these indecent floggings, and had threatened to make the whippers lick the dust. They took their revenge. On the 15th of May, when at nine o'clock in the morning Théroigne was crossing the Feuillants Terrace on her way to the Assembly, the women set upon her and fustigated her with such vigour that she might have died had not the guard rescued her from their hands. According to one account Marat was her deliverer. For Marat, as we have seen,[1] was something of a Feminist.

This was Théroigne's last appearance in public. She did not immediately lose her reason, as some have maintained; for there is evidence that she was managing her business affairs with perfect lucidity in the following summer. A year later she was incapable of doing so; and a family council was convened to nominate a guardian who should act for her. By that time Théroigne had been arrested by the revolutionary committee of her section, on what charge does not appear, but probably for some imprudent words uttered by her in a fit of madness. A prey to one of the most ghastly forms of lunacy, she was transferred from prison to an asylum and thence from madhouse to madhouse, during the twenty-three years of misery that remained to her. For she never recovered her reason. Finally, on the 1st of May,

[1] *Ante*, p. 202.

1817, her tragic existence closed in the Salpêtrière Hospital.

Théroigne's humiliation in May and Olympe's arrest in July, 1793, left Claire Lacombe the leader of the Women's Party. We have already seen her[1] as the moving spirit of the Women's Republican Revolutionary Club. Her Feminism was of a different kind from that of Olympe and Théroigne. While they strove for nothing more than women's admission, on the same terms as men, to citizenship in the bourgeois republic, Lacombe aimed at something much wider. While their motto was *le suffrage intégral*, hers might have been *l'humanité intégrale*. For Lacombe and her brilliant young lover, Thesée Leclerc[2] belonged to the most extreme of revolutionary factions, " les Enragés," with its headquarters in the Club of that name. Though the word *socialist* had not yet been invented, " les Enragés " were the Socialists of the Great Revolution, the ancestors of the Communards of 1871. Lacombe, or one of her women disciples, summed up their programme in a petition to the Convention, which said, " We desire that there should not be a single unfortunate person in the whole Republic." But before arriving at that blissful condition, " les Enragés " were prepared to justify their title by rendering multitudes unfortunate.

As sworn foes of the Jacobins, " les Enragés " were prepared to oppose them on any ground, even on that of *Modérantisme*; but generally " les Enragés," as extreme Terrorists of the Terror, protested against what they called the indulgence of the Convention. Leclerc, who had spent some time at Lyons before coming to Paris, had there proposed that six thousand aristocrats should be cast into the Saone.

Lacombe never followed her lover to such lengths. The accusation that she took part in the Prison Massacres of September, 1792, is without foundation.

[1] *Ante*, p. 103.
[2] For his romantic story see Lacour, op. cit., pp. 360-61.

Indeed, one of the charges brought against her at her arrest two years later was that in the Republican Revolutionary Club she had protested against these massacres.[1]

Nevertheless, she and her Club threw themselves on to the side of " les Enragés " in their attack on the Jacobins and the Convention. Their plan was to demand the immediate execution of the Constitution which the Convention had drawn up, but which it refused to put into action, until, so it said, the War was ended.

On the 26th of August, 1793, Lacombe appeared before the Convention, at the head of a deputation from the Republican Revolutionary Club. She demanded the execution of the laws of the Constitution.

"We have not," she remonstrated, " been the first to accept this constitution in order that anarchy and the rule of intriguers may be indefinitely prolonged. We call upon you, by dismissing all nobles, to show that their defenders are not among you. It is not enough to tell the people that their happiness is near, you must make them experience it; and four years unhappiness have rendered them chary of believing your fine promises. . . . With what indignation must the people behold men gorged with their money and fattened on their blood preaching to them patience and sobriety. . . . Would you have us believe that the country's enemies have no devoted defenders among you? Then dismiss all nobles without exception. If there be any of good faith they will prove it by sacrificing themselves willingly for the country's welfare. Be not afraid of disorganising the army. If a general's politics are bad, then the more talented he is, the more necessary is it to get rid of him. Do not be so unjust toward patriots as to believe that there is no one among them worthy to command our armies. . . . If, when despotism

[1] Lacour, op. cit., p. 332.

reigned, crime was rewarded, under liberty's rule virtue should be given the preference. You have decreed that all suspected persons shall be arrested. Is not such a law grotesque when those who execute it are themselves suspected? Ah! Legislators. Is this how you trick the people? Is this the equality on which their happiness was to be founded? Is this their reward for the incalculable evils they have suffered so long and so patiently? No, it shall not be said that this people, reduced to despair, must take justice into their own hands. You will execute justice by dismissing guilty administrators, by creating extraordinary tribunals in such numbers that our patriots when they start for the front may be able to say: 'We are not anxious about the fate of our women and children. For beneath the arm of the law we have seen all the plotters of the interior perish.' Decree these great measures and a mass levy of all the male population, and you will have saved *la patrie*.'"[1]

The Convention listened to Lacombe's speech in cold silence; and, as soon as it was finished, without note or comment, proceeded to the next business. The deputation had indeed experienced great difficulty in gaining admission. Another, which arrived after it, had been given the precedence; and against this injustice the young Leclerc, whose influence is plainly discernible in the petition itself, did not fail to protest.

Not all the measures proposed by "les Enragés" were as vindictive as these proposals of Lacombe. They advocated, for example, the institution of national work-shops, somewhat on the lines of those which were to prove a failure in the Revolution of 1848. Olympe, by the way, with her habitual inconsistency, had supported this social reform, though she was anything but a Socialist.

[1] Quoted by Lacour, op. cit., pp. 384-85

Girondins and Jacobins alike mistrusted "les Enragés." But the Jacobins, in their conflict with their political enemies, were glad to make use of these extremists. It is probable that with several other Republican Revolutionary Women, Lacombe was present at the Jacobin meetings of March, April and May, when the ruin of the Girondist party was decided on. When the Jacobins were finally victorious and the Girondist leaders either executed or driven to wander homeless throughout France, then the victors turned against their former allies. And in this second faction fight, as we shall see, Lacombe and the women's party she represented finally came to grief.

How far the hooligan women who, in the spring of 1793, were constituted, or constituted themselves, the doorkeepers of the Convention, were recruited by or even drawn from Lacombe's Revolutionary Republican Women has been much discussed. Girondist writers maintain that these frenzied mænads were members of the Club and that it consisted of prostitutes and *les plus hideuses coquines* of Paris. But the Girondins were not impartial critics of the Club, for it had been the most formidable of their political enemies. The Girondist accusation is not borne out by certain clauses in the Club's constitution. "The Republican Revolutionary citizenesses," begins one of these, "are convinced that without morals and principles liberty cannot exist. . . ." "The Society . . . has resolved," runs another, "that it will only admit citizenesses of good morals. This it considers to be the most essential of all qualifications, and it has resolved that any failure to comply with this condition shall constitute one of the principal causes of exclusion."[1] If the Club consisted of prostitutes, it was strange that on the 21st of September, 1793, it should have sent a deputation to petition the Convention to transfer "women of bad life" (*femmes de*

[1] Quoted by Lacour, op. cit., p. 355.

mauvaise vie) to houses instituted by the nation where they might be occupied in useful work, and, by means of patriotic reading, induced to forsake their evil ways; for, urged the petitioners, "these unhappy victims of libertinage often have good hearts; and it is poverty alone that has frequently reduced them to this deplorable condition."

As for the Jacobins, now that their Girondist enemies were disposed of, and they no longer needed the support either of the women roughs or of the Women's Club, they began to find both of them a nuisance, and in order to get rid of them were glad of the excuse of confounding the two with which their enemies had provided them.

In this association of the women's party with "les Enragés," the Jacobins found a further excuse for the Anti-feminist campaign they now began to carry on in the Convention, the Commune, the Jacobin Club, the Jacobin Fraternal Society, and even in the Republican Revolutionary Club itself.

This internecine campaign opened when, on the 31st of May, 1793, the Convention excluded women from its galleries. On that very day the women's party had received another rebuff: a deputation of women from the Republican Revolutionary Club to the Council General of the Commune had vainly petitioned that women should be allowed to join in the deliberations of the Revolutionary Committee of their own Section. When, three days later, the same deputation approached the Convention, they were denied admittance. On the 31st of July, the Women's Club was significantly left out of the project to erect an obelisk in honour of Marat, and this in spite of the fact, to which Lacombe publicly drew attention, that with the women the idea had originated.

Meanwhile Lacombe was having trouble with her own club; for some of its members refused to be identified with the ultra-violent party. One of these who had spoken at the Cordeliers Club was accused by

one of the Cordeliers of being too indulgent.[1] In August, Lacombe found it necessary to reproach certain of her followers with their devotion to Robespierre. "You are infatuated with Robespierre," she cried. "I regard him as an ordinary individual." In the Jacobin Club she was accused of having shown disrespect to Robespierre by calling him "Monsieur Robespierre."

In September, having in her turn become President of the Republican Revolutionary Club, Lacombe began a regular canvassing of the members of le Comité de Sûreté Générale with the object of obtaining their permission for the members of the Club to visit the prisons, to interrogate the prisoners and to set at liberty those whom they found innocent. Here "les Enragés" were substituting *modérantisme* for *terrorisme*. Two members of the Committee, Chabot and Basire, reported this extraordinary proceeding to the Jacobin Club. While roundly inveighing against Lacombe's action, they tried to explain it by saying that she had confessed to one of them her love for one of the prisoners, a Royalist, M. de Rey, son of a former Mayor of Toulouse. The wrath of the Jacobins, already waxing hot against Lacombe, rose to fever heat at this further accusation. The charge was probably groundless; for the object of this prison visitation was doubtless to set free some of the supporters of "les Enragés." Nevertheless, the Club was only too ready to believe Basire and Chabot's story. One member attributed to women the anarchical condition of the city. Protests from the women's gallery. But he continued and demanded Lacombe's arrest. Another citizen, Taschereau, with great probability, accused Lacombe of pushing herself in everywhere (*citoyenne Lacombe se fourre partout*).

At a meeting, at which the speaker was present,

[1] This "indulgence" may, however, only have been part of that alternative rôle of "les Enragés" to which we have already referred. *Ante*, p. 258.

he had heard her clamouring for the Constitution and nothing but the Constitution. "What hypocritical and Feuillantin (moderate) language, when she is trying to sap the foundation of the Constitution and to overthrow all constituted authorities." *Another citizen*: "The woman you denounce is very dangerous because she is very eloquent."

At this moment Lacombe herself enters one of the galleries and seems to ask to speak. The noise and confusion are terrific. The President puts on his hat.[1] When finally order is restored, the President, after rebuking Lacombe, puts two motions to the vote: first, that the Republican Revolutionary Club be asked to expel its suspected leaders; second, that le Comité de Sûreté Générale be asked to arrest such suspected persons. Both resolutions were passed unanimously. Then an amendment was proposed that Lacombe be taken at once before le Comité de Sûreté Générale. Thereupon a citizen objected that this could not be done, that the Comité could only be asked to summon Lacombe before it. "I do not doubt," added the speaker, "that she is an instrument of the counter-revolution."

Lacombe was not arrested; and on *la Gazette Française* announcing her arrest, she wrote to the editor, saying, "I will prove to you that my arms are as free as my body, for they will give themselves the treat of giving you a good whipping, if in your issue of to-morrow you do not eat your words, and I keep my word"—*Femme Lacombe—Présidente.*[2]

Though for the time being the President went free, the debate at the Jacobins had destroyed any prestige that remained to the Republican Revolutionary Club. On the 6th of October, a memorable anniversary, a deputation from a club, known as *la Société du* 10 *Août*, petitioned the Convention to dissolve the

[1] This gesture was usually the signal for adjournment. In this case it would appear to have been disregarded.
[2] Quoted by Lacour, p. 393.

Women's Club. Strange to say, and most unfortunately for the Club's reputation, the Convention refused. But, before the month was out, the conduct of the women themselves put a second refusal out of the question.

On the 28th of October, 1793, came the final struggle, which decided the fate of the women's party. Were its causes less well known, one might have suspected the Government of inciting an Anti-feminist pogrom in order once and for all to banish women from French politics. As far as I know, however, no reliable authority[1] has suggested that a "hidden hand" was behind the ostensible events that led to the disturbance. In the beginning the fault undoubtedly lay with the market women, *les poissardes*. And here, in this last act of the Revolution Feminist drama, as in the first, the bread and cheese question constitutes the determining factor. For, through the scarcity of food, the high prices and the consequent scarcity of customers, *les poissardes* were turning against the Republic, and, having torn off their tricolour cockades, were reverting to Royalism. In September, the Convention had made the wearing of the tricolour compulsory; and the Republican Revolutionary Women took it upon themselves to exact obedience to the decree. We have already told how they dealt with the recalcitrants,[2] how, donning the red cap and masculine trousers, les Clubistes paraded the streets, forcing the Royalist women to resume their cockades and even to put on the red cap. As was inevitable, *les poissardes* refused in their own special way. There were the usual floggings, and Lacombe herself is said to have shared Théroigne's humiliation. Meanwhile, a horde of *poissardes* had invaded the St. Eustache Charnel-house, where the

[1] A member of the Women's Club publicly declared her belief, *qu'il avait un coup de monté pour dissoudre la Société*. Lacour, op. cit., p. 398.

[2] *Ante*, p. 105.

Republican Revolutionary Women were in session. There occurred scenes of such disorder as to provoke the intervention of a male armed force, *la force armée*.[1] Not a large one, however, only six citizens with swords drawn and accompanied by a Justice of the Peace. The Justice contented himself with demanding from the platform silence in the name of the law; and then, after assuring the invaders of the Club that they would not again be asked to put on the red cap, but that they were at liberty to wear any head-dress that pleased them, he withdrew, followed by his swordsmen, all very glad, no doubt, to get out of the medley. But the Club women were disappointed with this mild intervention, and three times asked for it to be repeated. The armed men did not return. But unhappily for the Club, as it turned out, the Justice of the Peace, only too courageous, did put in a second appearance. Re-ascending the platform, he suggested as the best way to restore order, that the Vice-President, who was in the chair, should take off her red cap. She did so and put it on the head of the Justice of the Peace. Loud applause from the galleries. Then the Justice apparently took his revenge. He declared the meeting closed—"*les citoyennes révolutionnaires ne sont plus en séance*," he cried, "any one may come in." And they did. Immediately the rabble surged into the Charnel-house, and it seemed as if the gruesome place was about to deserve its name only too well. Had it not been for the intervention of a company of artillerymen there would doubtless have been slaughter of women by women. As it was, many of the club members were seriously wounded. Surgeons were called in. The soldiers succeeded in providing a way of escape for the attacked, who at first repeatedly refused to avail themselves of it. All they desired was to have a record (*procés verbal*) made of what had occurred. In the end they yielded to persuasion, and the Charnel-house was cleared.

[1] In *Les Révolutions de Paris*, No. 215.

Thus ended what proved to be the last meeting of the Club of Republican Revolutionary Women.

On the following day, the 29th of October, a deputation of women from one of the fraternal societies, " la Société Populaire de la Section du Bon Conseil,"[1] appeared before the Convention and complained of the disorderly conduct of " les citoyennes Républicaines Révolutionnaires." Thereupon the Convention, on the motion of Fabre d'Eglantine, requested " le Comité de Sûreté Générale " to report on the question of Women's Clubs. The Committee lost no time in sending in its report. Amar[2] read it to the Convention the very next day. The measure it proposed, the suppression of all women's clubs and societies, was of course a foregone conclusion. But the arguments it adduced struck much deeper than the question, then before the Convention, of the continuance of women's clubs in France. They reached down to the fundamental principles of relations between the sexes. They were a prelude to the laws, which, from that day to this, have determined those relations throughout the country.

It was from this broad standpoint that Amar approached the problem. " Are women capable of exercising political rights," he inquired, " and of taking an active part in the affairs of Government? " " When assembled in political associations, are they capable of deliberating? " The Committee, said Amar, had examined the two questions and had replied in the negative to both. Woman's nature is such, he argued, as to unfit her to take part in politics. In the height of the Terror, addressing one of the most hysterical Parliaments the world has ever seen, Amar declared that a quality essential in all who would take part in government is imperturbable equanimity. Then he went on to inquire whether a woman's appearance in public is compatible with her good fame.

[1] Villiers, op. cit., p. 65.

[2] 1750-1816, one of the most vindictive of Revolutionaries, later President of the Convention.

Women, he contended, can best serve their country by influencing their husbands and teaching their children to love liberty.

That Amar was preaching to the converted was obvious. After a brief discussion, the resolution that Clubs and Societies of Women, of whatever kind, are prohibited, was put and carried with only one dissentient voice, that of Charlier. He was an obscure Jacobin, of whom little is known. He based his objection on the argument that as women were human beings they ought not to be denied the right to meet together peaceably. Not a very fortunate line of argument, considering the occurrences of the previous day. Basire[1] rejoined that Charlier did not seem to understand the question then before the House. Then, forsaking Amar's broad line of reasoning, Basire maintained that the question was not one of principle so much as of expediency: whether or no these Women's Societies were dangerous. They had been proved to be dangerous. Therefore away with principles. It was this argument of inexpediency that was used by M. Clemenceau, when a women suffragist deputation waited upon him in 1919. "I grant," he replied, "that every argument for giving votes to men may be used for giving votes to women. But we dare not give women votes in France. "For fear," he added, "of increasing the power of the Church."

The women of the Revolution did not submit to their defeat without a protest. Denied access to the Convention, on the 28th of November, a large company of them appeared at the Council of the Commune. Thence too they were expelled after having been treated to an Anti-feminist diatribe by Anaxagore Chaumette.

Chaumette declared that the place in which the people's magistrates deliberate should be closed to all who insult the nation. "No," cried another member,

[1] See *ante*, p. 100.

who realised that the women were intended, "the law allows them to enter." "Read the law," retorted Chaumette; "the law decrees that morals shall be respected. Here I find them violated. Since when were women allowed to abjure their sex?"

Then in words which might have been Michelet's, this ex-priest fell to the usual Anti-feminist tactics for the so-called exaltation of woman as "the divinity of the domestic sanctuary." How could women be so foolish as to be discontented with a kingdom, in which legislators and magistrates are at their feet. "Your despotism," he cried, "is the only despotism we cannot destroy, since it is founded on love, and consequently on human nature. In the name of human nature stay as you are. . . . Remember that haughty wife of a stupid and perfidious husband, that Roland[1] who thought herself able to govern the Republic and endangered its fall. Remember that virago, that woman-man, the impudent Olympe de Gouges,[2] who . . . tried to meddle in politics and who committed crimes. All these immoral creatures have been annihilated by the arm of the law; and do you wish to imitate them? . . . Under the monarchy, women were everything because men were nothing. . . . Only in the reign of Charles VII. were Joans of Arc necessary." Chaumette's resolution that women should henceforth be excluded from the Commune's deliberations was carried.

Claire Lacombe had not figured among the women whom Chaumette had denounced by name, because he had only mentioned those who were dead. But Lacombe, though alive in the flesh, was dead politically. Her political reputation could not survive the events of the 28th of October. So she now returned to her original profession.[3]

[1] Mme Roland had been executed on the 3rd of that month, November, 1793. See *ante*, pp. 172-3.

[2] She had perished beneath the guillotine the day after Mme Roland. See *ante*, p. 251.

[3] See *ante*, p. 87.

Early in 1794, she was about to leave Paris for Dunkirk, to keep a theatrical engagement, when she was arrested on the charge of being connected with the Socialist enemies of the Government. The Socialist leader, Jacques Roux, had already been in prison several months. Leclerc was arrested about the same time as Lacombe. He had by this time married Pauline Léon, who had been Lacombe's predecessor as President of the Republican Revolutionary Club.[1]

Lacombe's imprisonment first in one gaol then another lasted seventeen months. For a while she was at the Luxembourg. There, carefully dressed and charming as ever, she turned an honest penny by selling candles to her fellow-prisoners. Meanwhile her women followers, of whom she always had a devoted band, were leaving no stone unturned in their endeavours to procure her liberty. At length, in the autumn of 1795, they succeeded. The order for her release, signed by the Comité de Sûreté Générale, and dated " le premier Fructidor " is the latest document and the latest information concerning this remarkable woman that has as yet been discovered.[2]

The women's party went down with the wreck of the Republican Revolutionary Club. The Women's Movement had resulted in complete failure. In face of the enormous prejudices against women's direct influence in politics, strengthened by the unfortunate influence of Marie Antoinette, in face of the lack of education and experience of the leading women, it had been doomed to failure from the outset; and latterly, had anything further been necessary to render its defeat inevitable, the final cause had been supplied by the alliance between Feminists and the Socialists who were the sworn foes of the party in power.

The Feminism of the Revolution, as we have seen, was the first combined attempt to win political enfranchisement made by Frenchwomen, indeed in

[1] See *ante*, p. 102.
[2] Lacour, op. cit., p. 413.

modern history by the women of any country. This great pioneer movement could hardly have been inaugurated at a more unfavourable time.

To pilot any movement past the shoals, the quicksands and the whirlpools of the tempestuous sea of the Revolution would have required genius of a particular order; and this the women's leaders did not possess. Most of the difficulties against which they had to contend have already been noticed. One that has not been mentioned is the Anti-feminism of prominent revolutionary women, notably of Mme Roland, Mme Robert and Mme Tallien.

Someone has said that there are two types of femininity; the pusseyish kind and the tigerish kind. Feminists are of the latter type, Anti-feminists of the former. Mme Roland, in her affectation of shrinking into the political background, is essentially pusseyish. In this respect her whole career was a paradox. For here was a woman founding and dominating a party, for a time guiding the whole movement of the Revolution and all the while insisting on the narrowest sex limitations. "She was convinced," writes her friend, Bosc,[1] "that woman must owe her celebrity entirely to the esteem she inspires by the exercise of her *domestic* virtues."

Mme Roland, deeply immersed in politics, could yet at the same time write to Bancal:[2] "I do not believe it to be in accordance with morals for women to come to the fore. They ought to exert a good influence, to foster and inflame every sentiment useful to *la patrie*, but they ought not to take any direct part in politics. They cannot come out into the open (*agir ouvertement*) until all Frenchmen deserve to be called free. Until then, our frivolity and our bad morals will render all that they do ridiculous."

Mme Robert and Mme Tallien held the same opinions. "Woman's domestic duties," wrote Mme

[1] In his Introduction to his edition of her *Mémoires*.
[2] On the 6th of April, 1791.

Robert, "forbid her to exercise administrative functions." "The companions of men ought not to be their rivals," said Mme Tallien. The only progressive measure either of them ever advocated were Mme Robert's proposal that health inspectors should be appointed in order to introduce some improvement into the miserable conditions prevailing in the hospitals, and Mme Roland's and Mme Tallien's demand for more educational advantages for women, but only that they might be fitter companions for men.

All three of them were in this respect the Mrs. Humphrey Wards of their day.

With the exception of short-lived newspapers, like *Bouche de Fer,* the whole Press of the day was Anti-feminist; and one of the most influential revolutionary journals, *Les Révolutions de Paris,* under the direction of Prudhomme, for years carried on a vigorous Anti-feminist campaign, mercilessly attacking all the Feminist leaders and the Women's Clubs. Like other Anti-feminists, the contributors to this newspaper were inconsistent; for while they maintained that woman has no concern whatever with anything outside the walls of her home, they called on women to assemble round the altar of *la patrie,* there to swear that they would never marry an aristocrat, that they would bear lighted torches into the Tuileries Palace, and that they would redouble their ardour when the country was invaded.

Did women then gain nothing at all from the Revolution? Olympe would not allow that they had benefited in any way whatever. But she was wrong. The Revolution had conferred on women two new social rights: the right to divorce and the right to equality of inheritance.

Revolutionary women, as we have seen, did not hesitate to exercise this right to divorce.[1] Husbands

[1] They acquired it by a law of September 20th, 1792.

too, in considerable numbers, availed themselves of it: and we have already mentioned the Club for Divorced Women[1] (*les dames en état de divorce*). Like certain clubs of the present day, it was a blend of the club proper and the pension. Among its advertised attractions were a piano, a harp and a harpsichord. It owed its existence to la citoyenne Neveux; and its quarters were the mansion, then known as l'Hôtel de Soubise, in which the National Archives are now kept.

One of the famous divorces of the Revolution was that of the actor Talma and his wife, Julie. Julie was wealthy as well as brilliant. Her house in la Rue de Chantereine[2] was stored full of priceless treasures, many of which served Talma as theatrical properties. Mme Talma had been a great inspiration to her husband in his profession. But she was seven years older than he; she had been his mistress before their marriage; and after a while he tired of her. Candid friends told Julie of his unfaithfulness. She sued for a divorce, sold her charming hotel to General Bonaparte, just home from Egypt, and went to live with her friend, Mme de Condorcet, in la Rue de Matignon. She wrote an account of the divorce proceedings to Louise Fusil.[3] "We (M. and Mme Talma) drove to the municipal offices in the same carriage. On the way we talked of all manner of subjects, like people taking a drive in the country. My husband gave me his hand as I alighted. We sat side by side; and we signed our names as if it had been the most ordinary contract. When it was done he escorted me to my carriage. 'I trust," said I, 'that you will not entirely deprive me of your society. You will come and see me sometimes, won't you?'

"'Certainly,' he replied, rather embarrassed, but evidently pleased.

"In spite of all my efforts to control myself, I was

[1] See *ante*, p. 81.
[2] See *ante*, p. 57.
[3] Louise Fusil, *Souvenirs*, vol. II, p. 92.

pale and my voice trembled with emotion. I went home and gave myself up to my grief. Pity me, for I am very unhappy."

Talma kept his promise. He often visited his former wife; and, says her friend, Louise, "his presence was always a consolation."

In many other cases divorce did not involve the cessation of friendly relations between those who had once been married. More than one woman who had divorced her husband risked her life to save his.

As time went on divorces grew more and more common. They were granted for insanity, desertion for two years at least, emigration abroad in some cases, notorious immoral life and incompatibility of temper.[1]

After the Restoration, Louis XVIII.'s Government abolished divorce; and it was not reinstituted until Naquet's Law in 1884.

The second benefit the Revolution conferred on women, the inheritance law, is in force to-day. The Statute which forbids a father totally to disinherit his children provides that he shall distribute his possessions equally among his male and female offspring. The far-reaching results of this measure, in giving a certain economic independence to the women of France, can with difficulty be exaggerated. Indirectly it has affected the question of women's suffrage; for it is this measure of economic independence that blinds many Frenchwomen to the importance of political enfranchisement.

Politically, women at the close of the Revolution were worse off than at the beginning. In none of its aims had the Revolution failed more signally than in the establishment of equality.

It was essentially a middle-class movement; and as such it had abolished but a few of the inequalities

[1] *Le Mariage! Qu'est-ce donc? Un bail résiliable de semaine en semaine, de nuit en nuit.* De Goncourt, *La Société Française pendant le Directoire*, p. 177.

between classes. Inequality between the sexes, despite the two reforms we have mentioned, it left more strongly accentuated than it had ever been; for relations between men and women, which before the Revolution had been regulated by vague custom, were now clearly defined by law and generally to the disadvantage of the woman. The most notable instance is that of the franchise. In 1789, as we have said, women were admitted to the outer court of citizenship by reason of a very limited property qualification. But the property vote of 1789 was swept away with other vestiges of the feudalism of which it was a relic; and the Revolution left Frenchwomen, as they have remained ever since, without votes for any governing body.

INDEX

ABBAYE, PRISON, 120, 133, 196, 7
Abensour, Léon, 6, 237 n. 2
Abrantès, Duchesse d', 226
Adam, Mme (Juliette Lamber), 65
Adelaide, Mme, 44
Ælders, Baron d', 100
Ælders, Etta Palm d', accused of being a spy, 245; addresses National and Legislative Assemblies, 244; at Social Circle, 100, 101, 240, 1, 2, 3, 4; feminism of, 239 and n. 2, 243, 44; woman's club founded by, 100; origin of, 100; Paris flat of, 101; self-education of, 246
Agoult, Comtesse d' (Daniel Stern), 65
Aire-sur-Lys, 98
Albany, Countess of, 61
Alembert, Jean le Rond d', 23, 52 n. 2
Alfieri, 61
Alkan, 175
Altona, 155
Amar, 121, 267, 3
Amiens, 112
Amiens, Bishop of. *See* Desbois
Amsterdam, 100, 184
Anderlecht, 182
Antin, Chaussée d', 68
Antinous, 125
Antoine, Faubourg St. *See* St. Antoine.
Antwerp, 39
Apôtres, les Actes des, 43, 255
Arago, 60, 71 n., 72 n. 3, 4 n.'s 1 and 2
Arc, Joan of, 48
Arçon, le Michaud d', 64
Ariège, 87
Armont, Seigneur d'. *See* Corday, Jacques François de
Arras, 132, 151 n., 152, 172
Artois, Comte d', 48, 62, 141
Aspasia, 63
Athénée, l', 63
Aubry, Mlle, 225
Aubry, Pierre, 164
Audu, Renée, attack on the Tuileries, part in, 50; Châtelet Law Court trial by, 47, 8; Christian name of, 46; clubiste, 93; end of, 50; imprisonment of, 50, 89; legend of, 48, 9, 50; Versailles Insurrection, share in, 37, 46, 7
Aulard, Professor, 6, 18 n., 80 n., 81 n., 83 n.'s 1 and 2, 89, 92 n. 2, 97 n. 1, 103 n. 2, 5 n. 1, 19 n.'s 1 and 2, 74 n. 3, 202 n. 3, 10 n. 4, 39 n. 1, 44 n. 1, 63 n. 2, 21 and n. 3, 23 n. 1, 25 n.'s 2 and 3
Aurelius, Marcus, 59
Auteuil, 64, 5, 7, 9, 70, 3, 5
Autun, Bishop of. *See* Talleyrand
Avranches, 227

BABET, *dame*, 37
Bac, Rue de, 79

INDEX

Bailly, Jean Sylvain, 33, 120 n, 137, 73
Bâle, 137
Bancal des Issarts, 125, 71
Barbaroux, 125, 190, 1, 2, 7
Baré, Rose, 37
Barentin, Chancellor, 134
Barnave, 97, 120 n.
Barthélemy, 38 and n. 2
Basire, 100, 263, 8
Baudelaire, 38 and n. 3
Baudroy, *citoyenne*, 103
Baudry, 14, 142
Bax, Belfort, 202 n. 1
Beauharnais, Joséphine, 19, 57
Beauharnais, Marie Anne Françoise Mouchard, Comtesse de, 56
Beaujolais, Comte, 141
Beaumarchais, 237
Beaumont, Mme de, 171
Beugnot, Comte, 123
Beurnonville, General, 181
Biron, M. de, 144
Blanc, Louis, 25 and n.
Blois, 119
Bologna, 234
Bonaparte, Joseph, 76
Bonaparte, Lucien, 76
Bonaparte, Napoleon. *See* Napoleon
Bonhomme, Honoré, 180 n. 2
Bordeaux, 234
Bosc, 121, 5, 6, 271
Bossuet, 206
"Bouche de Fer," newspaper, 92, 101, 71, 211, 40
Boufflers, Mme de, 23, 4, 64, 76
Bougeart, Alfred, 193 n.
Bourbon, Duchesse de, 101, 228 and n. 1, 232, 3, 4
Bourdaloue, 209
Bourdon, le Sieur, 166
Bourg-la-Reine, 74, 213
Boyer, 69
Bray, Vicar of, 69
Bray, Vicaresses of, 205
Brentano, Funck, 21 n.
Bretteville, Mme de, 189, 91, 2
Breteuil, de, 24
Brissac, 168
Brissot, 57, 108, 13, 15, 21, 51, 213
Brunetière, Ferdinand, 61 n. 1
Brussels, 137, 61
Brutus, 56, 198, 202
Buchez, 29 n. 1
Burnout, 46
Bury, Professor, 129
Buzot, 113, 26, 27, 90

CABANIS, Dr. Pierre Jean Georges, 67, 89, 194
Cabarrus, Therèse,. *See* Tallien, Mme
Caen, 188, 9, 90, 2, 3, 5, 8, 201
Cailhava, 82
Calonne, Comptroller General, 81, 106
Calvados, 127
Cambon, 210
Campinados, Comtesse de. *See* Méricourt, Théroigne de
Candeille, Julie, 57, 160, 1 and n. 2, 2, 3, 4,
Capet, Louis. *See* Louis XVI.
Carabosse, 163
Carlyle, Thomas, 36, 7, 43, 118, 121, 225
Carraut. *See* Robespierre, Charlotte de
Carrousel, Place du, 147, 202
Catherine, Empress, 54
Cato, 123
"César, La Mort de," 56
Chablis, 240
Chabot, 119 and n. 1, 196, 263
Chabry, Louison, 31, 2, 3, 6, 7, 47
Champ de Mars, Feast of the Federation on, 138; massacre on, 63, 152, 173
Champagneux, 112 n. 2
Champion, 103
Chantereine, Rue, 57, 273
Charles I., 170

INDEX

Charles VII., 269
Charles X. *See* Artois, Comte d'
Charlier, 268
Charpentier, Gabrielle. *See* Danton, Mme
Charpentier, Maria, 26
Chartres, Duc de, 37, 91, 4, 159, 182
Châtelet, Law Court, 28, 37, 44, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 50
Châtelet, Prison, 89
Chaucer, 96
Chaumette, Anaxagore, 36, 120 n., 219, 22, 25, 28, 30, 68
Chenau, 48, 9
Chénier, André, 57, 60, 191
Chénier, M. J., 223
Cherbourg, Hôtel de, 156
Cheveau-Lagarde, 122, 98
Christian VII., King of Denmark, 60
Christine de Pisan, 107
Citoyennes, les bonnes, 35, 6
Clamart, 72 and n. 3, 74
Clemenceau, 268
Clootz, Anarcharsis, 14, 61, 115, 242
Club, the Breton. *See* Club, the Jacobin
Club, Cordeliers. *See* Cordeliers
Club, the Jacobin, 17, 50, 5, 82, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 92, 7, 8, 9, 102, 4, 5, 14, 15, 19, 33, 64, 8, 73, 6, 85, 202, 40, 7, 51, 4, 6, 9, 62, 3
Club, St Eustache. *See* Club, Women's Republican Revolutionary
Clubs, Women's, 16, 17, 99; at Paris, 99, 100, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 244; closing of, 106, 267, 8; in the Provinces, 99, 100; Republican Revolutionary, 177, 202, 3, 23, 4, 59, 61, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Coblenz, 141, 9
Colmar, 95, 6
Colombe, village of, 141
Colombe, Mme, 175
Conciergerie Prison, 122, 133, 200
Concordat, the, 204
Concorde, Place de la, 200 n. 3
Condè, Prince de, 167
Condorcet, Alexandrine Louise Sophie de, 63, 72 n. 3, 5 and n., 6, 7, 8
Condorcet, Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de, 15, 17, 18, 57, 60, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 70, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 91, 226, 7, 37, 8 and n.'s 1 and 2, 9, 43
Condorcet, Mme de, 212, 43, 73; advanced opinions of, 62, 8, 77; at Le Lycée, 63; compared with Mme de Staël, 77 and n. 2, 8; divorce of, 75; education of, 54; marriage of, 60; poverty of, 70; publications of, 77; repartee to Napoleon, 76, 77 and n. 1; salon of, 14, 237; (1) at l' Hôtel des Monnaies, 53, 60, 1, 2, 3; (2) la Rue de Lille, 63, 4; (3) la Rue Matignon, 76; (4) La Rue de Penthièvre, 77; youth of, 59
Constant, the brothers, 60
Contat, Mlle, 25
Contrescarpe, Rue, 228, 30
Conway, 64
Coppet, 79
Corday, Adrien de, 187 n. 1
Corday, Charlotte de, 14, 121, 88, 93, 4, 5, 7, 8, 221 and n. 1; appearance of, 187, 9; cross-examination of, 196; descent of, 186, 7 and n.; early life of, 187; education of, 188; early republicanism of, 188, 9; execution of, 200; legend of, 202, 3; lovers of, 201, 2; Marat's destruction resolved on by, 190, 1; Marat's murder, 195; occupations in Paris before, 206; religious opinions of, 206;

trial of by Revolutionary Tribunal, 198, 9
Corday, Jacques François de, 187 and n. 1, 8
Corday, Marie Charlotte Jacqueline de, 187
Cordeliers, church, 114
Cordeliers, club, 17, 88, 9, 90, 1, 2
Cordeliers, district, 89, 90, 252, 3
Cordeliers, rue des, 193, 4
Corneille, Marie, 187
Corneille, Pierre, 187, 90
Cornelia, 96, 240
Courtray, 147
Crancé, Dubois de, 119 and n. 1
Creil, 242, 3

D'ALEMBERT. *See* Alembert, Jean le Rond de
Dauny. *See* Latude
Dansart, Claude, 94
Danton, 94, 117, 9 and n. 2, 75 205, 16, 17, 19
Danton, Mme, 205, 14, 15
Dantons, the, 213
Dauban, 125, 6
David, Jacques Louis, 57
Dayot, Armand, 29 n. 2, 148 n. 2, 95 n., 200 n. 1, 22 n. 1
De France, 187 n. 1, 197 n. 2, 201 n. 1.
Deltufo, 175
Desbois, 232, 33
Desmoulins, Camille, 42, 89, 120 n., 211, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 245, 53
Desmoulins, Horace, 211, 13, 17, 18, 19
Desmoulins, Lucile, 211, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26; religious opinions of, 215, 34, salon of, 173, 213
Desmoulins, the, 214 n.
Diderot, 54, 237
Didot, 175
Dijon, 99
Disraeli, Benjamin, 52
District, the Cordeliers. *See* Cordeliers
Dodun, Mme, 56
Dordogne, department of, 210, 32
Doublet, Armand Nicolas, Marquis de Persan. *See* Persan, Marquis de
Doulcet de Pontécoulant, 198
Duchesne, le Père, 163, 222
Dufraisse-Duchey, 47 n. 1
Dumouriez, General, 57, 8 and n.'s 1 and 2, 115, 32, 55, 62, 64 n. 1, 80, 81, 82
Dunkirk, 270
Duperret, 121, 91, 2, 3
Duplay, cabinet-maker, 174
Duplay, Eleanor, 226
Duplay, Mme, 56, 152
Duplessis, Adèle. *See* Duplay, Mme
Duplessis, Lucile. *See* Desmoulins, Lucile
Duplessis, Mme, 213, 8, 9
Duplessis, M., 213
Dupont, Manette, 180
Duport, Counsellor, 81, 2

ECOLE DE MÉDICINE, RUE, 88, 194
Egalité. *See* Orléans, duc d'
Elizabeth, Mme, 120 n.
Elizabeth, Queen of England 172
Ellis, Havelock, 237
Enragés, les, 102, 225, 58, 9, 60, 1, 3 and n. 1
Epinay, Mme d', 107
Estaing, 49
Eudora. *See* Roland, Mlle
Eure, department of, 210
Evrard, Catherine, 196, 221
Evrard, Simonne, 194, 5, 6, 9, 220, 1
Evreux, 206

FABRE D'ÉGLANTINE, 119 and n. 1, 267
Farcy, Françoise, 187 n. 1

INDEX

Fauchet, Abbé, 92 and n. 3, 211, 32, 33
Fauchet, Bishop. *See* Fauchet, Abbé
Faugère, 125, 6
Favart, Rue, 245
Fermière, la belle, 161, 2
Fernig, Aimée de, 180
Fernig, Félicité de, 181, 2, 3
Fernig, Jean Louis Joseph de, 180, 1
Fernig, Louis Joseph de, 180
Fernig, Louise de, 180
Fernig, Théophile de, 181, 2, 3; correspondence of, 4
Fernig, the sisters, early life of, 180; end of, 183, 4; enter army, 181, 2; prowess in battle, 182; rewarded by Convention, 182
Filles - Saint - Thomas, Church, 233
Flammarens, Hôtel, 45
Flaubert, 222 n. 2
Fléchier, 209
Fleischmann, 226 n. 1
Fontenay-aux-Roses, 72 and n. 3, 73
Fontenelle, 65
Forrest, Anne, 37
Fossoyeurs, Rue des, 69, 72
Fouché, Joseph, 220
Fouché, Mme, 220
Fouquier-Tinville, 218 and n. 2
Fourier, 236 n.
Fournier, " the American," 46
France, Anatole, 125
France, de. *See* De France
Francis I., 204
Franklin, Benjamin, 61, 6, 97, 223
Franquelin, 201
Fusil, Louise, 56 and n., 57 n., 82 and n. 1, 128 and n. 5, 129, 30, 8, 9, 40, 8, 9, 63, 216 n. 1, 73 n. 3, 4

GARAT, 19, 54, 69, 73, 8, 192, 3
Garros, the sisters, 98
Geneva, 40, 1
Genlis, Hôtel de, 87
Genlis, Mme de, 130, 80 n. 2; adventure of, 141, 2, 3; Bastille, at destruction of, 25; wears stone of, 26; Bellechasse, salon of, 56; birthday of, 135, 7; canoness, 59; Cordeliers Society, present at, 89, 90 and n.; *emigrée,* 143; memoirist, 128 and n. 3, 9, 30, 1, 2, 3, 82, 3; relations with Duc d'Orléans, 153, 4, 64; with Orléans family, 155; with Dumouriez, 155; return to France after Revolution, 158; for one night in 1792, 153; Robespierre's death announced to, 155
Geoffrin, Mme, 54
Gerle, Dom, 228, 9, 312
Gibbon, Edward, 78
Gillray, 257
Giroux, 135
Gluck, 161
Godefroy, Widow, 228, 9
Goncourts, the De, 19, 26, 7, 34 n. 1, 35 n., 37, 42 n. 2, 55 n. 2, 85, 6 n. 1, 133, 61, 71, 212, 47 n. 2, 74 n.
Gossec, 223
Gouges, Olympe de, arrest of, 250, 8; attacked by Chaumette, 269; by mob, 170; attacks Robespierre, 167; conservatism of, 167; denunciation of Charlotte Corday by, 203; early life of, 165; education of, 246; execution of, 251, 69 and n. 2; Feminism of, 14, 15, 171, 239, 45, 6, 7, 8, 9 and n. 1, 51, 2, 72, 246, 56; militarism, 177 and n. 1; offers to defend King, 168, 9, 70, 249-50; pamphleteer, 164, 5, 6 and n., 7; playwright, 162, 3, 4; political insight of, 166;

INDEX

Republicanism of, 167, 189; reforms advocated by, 246, 8, 9, 50, 60; trial of, 125; will of, 250
Gouze, Marie. *See* Gouges, Olympe de
Gournay, Mlle de, 236
Gracchi, 241
Grégoire, 175
Grenoble, Hôtel de, 252
Grimm, 54, 5, 61, 78
Groningen, 100
Grouchy, Charlotte de, 64, 8
Grouchy, Mme de, 59, 64
Grouchy, Maréchal de, 59
Grouchy, Marie Louise de. *See* Condorcet, Mme de
Grouchy, Marquis de, 58, 60
Guénégaud, Rue, 174
Guillot, Mary, 185
Guillotin, Dr., 31 and n. 2

HALLES, GAZETTE DES, 171
Hamel, 109 n. 1, 160, 226 n. 1
Hastain, Michael, 228, 30
Hauer, 199, 200 n. 1
Hébert, 120 n, 205, 19, 22, 5
Hébert, Mme, 205, 19
Helman, 222 n. 1
Helvétius, 64, 5, 7, 8
Helvétius, Mme, death of, 77; salon of, at Auteuil, 53, 64, 21, 5, 6, 7; at Paris, 65
Hennin, Collection, 29 n. 2, 210 n. 2
Henriette de Sillery, 57
Herbois, Collot d', 104, 5, 56
Hicks, J. R., 224 n.
Himmel, Theodore Gottlich von, 237
Holopherne, 29 n. 1
Hongrie, le Reine de, 46
Horace, 73
Horatius Coclès, 56
Hôtel Britannique, 113, 7
Hottot, café, 35, 254
Humphrey Ward, 272

IDA, MOUNT, 90

JEMAPPES, 182, 5
Joan of Arc, 177, 232
Joans of Arc, 269
Joséphine. *See* Beauharnais, Joséphine
Jourdain, 251 n.
Judith, Book of, 191
Judiths, 29 n. 1
Jullien, Mme, 84 and n. 1, 128 and n. 4, 9; political opinions of, 131, 2, 3; religious opinions of, 206, 8; writes on: agitation in Paris, 145; alleged Royalist conspiracy, 144, 5; events of June 20th, 14, 7, 8; of August 10th, 1792, 148, 9; patriotism, 146; prison massacres, 150; Robespierre family, 151; Roland, 146; the war, 144

KANT, 137
Kéralio, le Chevalier Guynement de, 172
Kéralio, Mlle de. *See* Robert, Mme
Kercy, M. de, 155, 6
Kuffstein, Fortress of, 85

LABROUSSE, SUZETTE, 231 and n., 2, 3, 4
Lacombe, Claire, addresses Convention, 259, 60; Legislative Assembly, 87; appearance of, 87 and n. 2; arrest of, 270; denounced in Jacobin Club, 263, 4; early life of, 87; Feminism of, 15, 239, 58; Goddess of Reason, 225, 69; humiliation of, 265; imprisonment of, 270; militarism of, 179; President of Woman's Club, 103, 263; prison massacres, participation in, 258, 9; release of, 270; Socialism of, 258
Lacour, Léopold, 6, 38 and n. 4,

39 n. 1, 42 n. 3, 87 n.'s 1 and 2, 89 n. 4, 161 n. 3, 168 n. 2, 83 n., 211 n. 2, 252 n. 1, 55 n. 2, 259 n., 60 n., 61 n., 64 n. 2, 65 n. 1, 67 n. 1, 70 n.
Lafayette, General, 63, 113, 40, 73
La Harpe, 62
Lally Tollendal, 79
Lairthullier, 215 n. 2
Lamartine, 26, 37, 60 n. 1, 120, 3 and n. 2, 60
Lamballe, Princesse de, 37
Lamber, Juliette. *See* Adam, Mme
Lambert, Mme de, 107, 236
Landor, W. S., 186
Langres, Bishop of, 47
Lanthenas, 86, 96, 125, 76
Laponneraye, 128 and n. 6
Laporte, 168
La Roche, 66, 7, 9, 76
La Sicotierè, 20 n. 1
Lasserre, Adrien, 5, 6
La Tour, Quentin, 65
Latude, Marquis de, 21, 2, 3, 4, 5, 51, 101
La Vendée, 178
Laviot, *dame*, 37
Lavoisier, 57
Lebanon, Mount, 90
Lebrun, 245
Leclerc, *dame*, 37
Leclerc, Thésée, 103, 258
Lecointre, *dame*, 103
Legros, Mme Henriette, 22, 3, 4, 5 n., 50, 101
Lemaure, Mlle, 89
Lemontey, 110 n.
Lenôtre, 158 n. 1, 89 n., 99 n., 205 n., 12 n.
Leo X., Pope, 204
Léon, Pauline, 102, 3, 78, 202
Leopold, Emperor, 85
Lescot, Fleuriot, 13
Liège, 39
Limburg, 39
Lindet, Thomas Bishop, 210
Lockroy, Edouard, 128 and n. 4
Longwy, B. of, 119, 181
Lot, wife of, 205
Louis XIII., Place de, 178
Louis XIV., 52, 167
Louis XV., 27, 75
Louis XVI., 29, 30, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 40, 6, 7, 8, 9, 50, 61, 7, 8, 9, 117, 18, 20, 34, 5, 6, 41, 54, 65 n., 7, 8, 9, 70, 89, 233, 47, 9
Louis XVIII., 274
Louis Blanc, 160
Louis, Dr., 31 n. 2
Louis Philippe. *See* Chartres, duc de
Louis, St., 206
Louvet, 117, 90
Lückner, 147
Lux, Adam, 201, 2
Luxembourg, 39
Luxembourg, Mme de, 23, 4
Lycée, le, 62, 3
Lyons, 59, 87, 99, 100 n. 1, 12, 13, 14, 231, 58

Macintosh, Sir James, 61
Macon, Council of, 86 n., 7, 99, 253 and n. 2
Madelin, Louis, 6
Mademoiselle la Grande, 236
Maillard, Mlle, 225
Maillard, Stanislas, 28, 9, 30, 3, 43
Maillebois, Comte de, 100
Maintenon, Mme de, 52
Mainz, 201
Malesherbes, 169 n. 1
Manon. *See* Roland, Mme
Manuel, 86, 7, 94
Marat, Albertine, 221
Marat, Jean Paul, 57, 8, 121, 60, 86, 90, 3 and n. 2, 194 and n. 2, 195, 6, 9, 200, 1, 2, 3 n. 1, 20, 1, 6, 57, 62
Marchand, 172
Marcourt, Terwagne of. *See* Méricourt, Théroigne de
Margaret of France, 52 n. 1

INDEX

Margaret of Navarre, 107
Marie Antoinette, 23, 4, 33, 4, 5, 44, 6, 7, 85, 107, 20 n. 1, 134, 5, 143, 62, 7, 77, 247, 8, 70
Marion, 146, 8
Marmontel, 62, 78
Marseilles, 139, 49
Maser, Henri. *See* Latude, Marquis de
Matignon, Rue, 273
Mathiez, Professor, 6, 27 n. 2, 89, 227 n. 2
Maubert Place, 172
Menander, 56
Mercier, 213, 37
Meredith, George, 236
Méricourt, Théroigne de, 41, 2, 3; addresses the Cordeliers, 89, 90, 1, 252; attacks the Tuileries, 254; at the Jacobin Club, 84, 5, 6, 7, 104, 76, 8, 254; Bastille, at taking of, 26 and n.'s 2 and 3; death of, 258; early life of, 38, 9, 40, 1; eloquence of, 85; Feminism of, 239, 52, 4, 6; flight to Flanders, 45; flogging of, 257; founds clubs, 41; men's, 252; women's, 104; founds regiment of women, 178; a salon, 41, 57, 254; imprisonment of, 85; madness of, 14, 257; marriage of, 40; Minimes Club, member of, 93; prison massacres, participation in, 255; repulsed by Cordeliers, 253, 4; Suleau affair, 255; violence of, 255; Versailles insurrection, share in, 37, 8 and n.'s 1, 2, 3; 43, 4, 5
Metz, 49
Meudon, 30
Michel, Dr., 241
Michelet, Jules, 5, 13, 25 and n. 2, 26, 9 n. 1, 37, 51, 82, 110 n., 25, 60, 73, 87 n. 1, 200 n. 1, 202, 4, 12, 15 n. 1, 20, 5, 30, 1, 45, 55, 69
Mill, John Stuart, 239
Miltiade, 56
Minimes, Club, 178
Mirabeau, 44, 6, 68, 80, 97, 134, 9, 40, 1, 4, 233
Miriamionnes, Convent of, 227
Mohl, Mme, 66
Molière, 165
Momoro, Mme, 225
Monod, Gabriel, 222 n. 2
Mons, 144
Montauban, 164
Montesquieu, 52, 62, 223, 37
Montmorin, M. de, 62
Moore, Dr. John, 87
More, Hannah, 94
Morley, Lord, 61 n. 1, 238 n. 1
Mounet, 222 n. 1
Mounier, President, 31, 7
Mouret, Mme, 171
Muniks, Jan, 100
Museum, Carnavalet, 179

NAPLES, Bay of, 109
Napoleon Bonaparte, 19, 20, 68, 76, 184, 204, 20, 73
Naquet, Law of, 274
Narbonne, 79
Necker, M., 27, 78, 132, 4, 5, 8
Necker, Mme, 23, 58, 78, 136
Neerwinden, B. of, 182
Nemèry, Marie, 37
Neuville-en-Bresse, 59
Nevers, 220
Neveux, *citoyenne*, 273
Newhaven, *Lettres d'un Bourgeois de*, 238
Newspapers, edited by women, 171, 2; for women, 55, 171; owned by women, 171; printed by women, 175
Nièvre, department of, 220
Ninon de l'Enclos, 165

O'CONNOR, Arthur, 75 n.
O'Connor, Mlle. *See* Condorcet, Alexandrine Louise Sophie de

INDEX

Olympe. *See* Gouges, Olympe de
Orléans, Duc d' (Egalité), 25, 39, 40, 4, 6, 57, 81, 101 n. 4, 129, 36, 53, 4, 64, 6 n., 213, 28 n. 1, 54
Orléans, family of, 155
Orléans, Mlle d', 144, 53, 4
Otranto, Duke of. *See* Fouché, Josephe

PACHE, Jean Nicolas, 83
Pache, Mme, 83
Pache, Mlle, 83
Paine, Thomas, 14, 61, 115
Palm, Etta Palm d'Ælders. *See* Ælders, Etta Palm d'
Palm, Loderoyk, 100
Pamela, 141, 44, 53
Pamiers, 87
Paris, Archbishop of, 111
Pasquier, Chancellor, 25
Passy, 66
Pellet, Marcellin, 26, 39 n. 1, 42 n. 3, 255 n. 1
Penthièvre, Duc de, 37
Penthièvre, rue, 77
Pericles, 56
Périgord, 232
Perregaux, 41
Persan, Marquis de, 40, 1
Pétion, 41, 144, 90, 201, 11, 13
Philippe le Bel, 18, 238
Phlipon, Mme, 111
Phlipon, Marie Jeanne. *See* Roland, Mme
Phlipon, M., 111
Pignon, citizeness, 64
Pindar, 86
Pinel, 69
Pisan. *See* Christine de
Pius VII., Pope, 204
Platrière, Roland de. *See* Roland
Plautus, 56
Plutarch, Lives of, 110, 92
Pochelat, Catherine, 185
Polyphemus, 135
Pompadour, Mme de, 23
Pontard, Bishop of Dordogne, 210
Portias, 87
Provence, Comte de, 44, 62
Providence, Hôtel de, 192
Prud'homme, 104 n. 2

RAIKES, Robert, 94
Rambouillet, Mme de, 52
Récamier, Mme, 78
Reinach, Salomon, 204 n. 1
Renault, Cécile, 177, 226
République, Théâtre de, 161, 2
Révolutions de Paris, Les, anti-feminism of, 171, 204 n. 2
Rey, M. de, 263
Robert, François, 94, 172, 3, 4
Robert, Mme, 173, 213, 56; anti-feminism of, 271, 2; at Jacobin Club, 84; early life of, 172; feud with Mme d'Ælders, 245; received into Arras Academy, 171, 3; Republicanism of, 173, 4 n. 3; salon of, 14, 56, 173; works of, 172, 3, 4
Robespierre, Auguste, 150, 5, 2, 58
Robespierre, Charlotte, 128, 9, 31, 32, 50, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8
Robespierre, Maximilien, 15, 17, 56, 76, 97, 104, 5, 9 n. 1, 114, 119, 28 and n. 6, 32, 50, 5, 6, 8, 67, 73, 4, 204, 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 26, 30, 1, 3, 6, 7, 50, 3, 6, 63
Robin, Françoise, 37
Rochefoucauld, Duc de la, 60
Roederer, 94
Rohan, 22
Roland de la Platrière, 83, 4, 111, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and n's. 1 and 2, 120, 24, 26, 48, 64 n. 1
Roland, Mme, 13, 15, 58, 61, 83, 6, 96, 108, 74, 5, 6, 123, 4, 269; anti-feminism of, 243, 71, 2; appearance of, 110; appears

before Convention, 118, 19 and n. 1; arrest of, 120 and n. 1; early life of, 109, 10, 11; early reading of, 188; education, 110; execution, 122, 269 n.; imprisonment, 121, 197 and n. 1; journalism, 113, 71; letter to King, 146; life at Lyons, 113; literary inspiration of, 109; marriage, 112; married life of, 124; Memoirs of, 109 n., 110, 16, 128 and n. 2, 29, 30, 2; militarism of, 177; pamphlets of, 164; philosophy of, 234; religious opinions of, 206; Republicanism of, 174 n. 3; romance of, 125, 6, 7; salon of, 53 and n. 2; Girondist Party organised in, 56; first salon, 113, 14; second salon, 115; third salon, 115; fourth salon, 118; suitors of, 112
Roland, Eudora, 112 and n. 2, 116
Romme, 41, 239
Ronceray, 145, 87
Roncher, 145
Rousand, 103
Rousseau, Charles, 240, 41, 42
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 59, 67, 97, 109, 29, 61, 208, 23, 37
Roux, 29 n. 1

St. André des Arts, Church of, 225
St. Angelo, Castle of, 234
St. Antoine, Faubourg, 104, 147 n. 3, 178, 210, 228 n. 2, 254
St. Armand, 155
St. Catherine of Sienna, 228
St. Eustache, Charnel-house of, 102, 3, 65, 6
St. Eustache, Church of, 102, 56, 225; sermon at, 209
St. Eustache, quarter of, 28
St. Germain l'Auxerrois, Church of, 210
St. Lazare, gare de, 64
St. Leu, 135, 7
St. Sulpice, Church of, 211, 225
St. Theresa, 228
Sainte-Beuve, 107 n. 2, 123, 125, 9
Ste. Marguerite, Church of, 211
Ste. Pélagie, prison, 50, 121, 33, 97
Salpêtrière, hospital, 41
Samson, executioner, 133
Sand, George, 252
Santerre, 57, 104, 47, 254
Santerre, Mme, 104
Saone, the R., 258
Sarret, 72 and n. 3
Scævolas, 87
Ségur, 54
Senart, 228
Sercy, Henriette de, 141
Servandoni, Rue. *See* Fossoyeurs, Rue des
Sévigné, Mme de, 18, 107
Sèvres, 30, 48
Shaw, Bernard, 61
Sheba, Queen of, 90
Sielk, 183
Sieyès, Abbé, 17, 18, 41, 239
Sillery. *See* Henriette de
Sillery, Marquis de, 56, 142 n. 3, 143, 153 and n., 213
Simon, Pierre. *See* Condorcet
Sitter, De, 100
Smith, Adam, 61, 77
Solomon, King, 90
Soubise, Hôtel de, 273
Staël, Mme de, 23, 4, 55, 78, 107, 28 and n. 1, 32; compared with Mme Roland, 108; conversation of, 78; culture of, 113; describes meeting of States-General, 133, 4, 5; Necker's resignation, 135; recall, 137, 8; judges Mirabeau, 140; literary inspiration, source of, 109; nearly arrested, 79; political opinions of, 78, 130; religious opinions of, 78, 206, 7, 8, 34; salon of, 53, 78,

9; writes to Mme de Condorcet, 77
Stern, Daniel. *See* Agoult, Comtesse de
Sterne, Laurence, 22
Stanhope, Lord, 61
Suard, Mme, 54, 61, 72 and n. 3
Suard, M., 60, 72 and n. 3, 73, 4
Suleau, 255

TAINE, Hippolyte, A, 37, 46, 53 n. 4, 180
Talleyrand, 53, 76, 9, 140, 239
Tallien, Mme, 16 and n., 19, 93, 5; anti-feminism of, 271, 2
Tallien, Jean Lambert, 94
Talma, François Joseph, 57, 273, 4
Talma, Mme Julie, 57, 8, 76, 273
Target, 169
Taschereau, 263
Tasso, 59
Tencin, Mme de, 52
Tenducci, 40
Théot, Catherine, 227 and n. 2, 228, 9, 30, 1, 4
Théroigne. *See* Méricourt, Théroigne de
Tonnerre, 240
Toulouse, Hôtel de, 41
Tournay, 154, 5
Tourneux, Maurice, 178
Tournon, Rue de, 254
Tours, 119
Tricoteuses, 226, 56; origin of the term, 36
Turgot, 27, 60, 6, 78

VADIER, 230, 1
Valence, M. de, 183
Valenciennes, 181
Valmy, B. of, 182
Valois, Marguerite de, 236
Varennes, 141, 67
Vatel, 221 n. 1, 160
Vauxain, 231
Vauxhall, the Parisian, 148
Venice, 184
Vergniaud, 56, 7, 113, 21, 46, 51, 60, 1, 203
Vernet, Mme, 69, 70, 1, 2 and n. 3, 76
Vernon, 197
Verone, Maria, 246
Verrières Wood, 72 n. 3, 74
Versailles, Picture Gallery, 200 n. 1
Versailles, Hunger March to, 14; a march to, 27, 8, 9; procession to, 35, 7, 43; Insurrection of, 51
Verte Allure, Mme de, 171
Vesta, 220
Vilate, 227 n. 1
Villette, château, 59
Villiers, Baron Marc de, 6, 29 n. 1, 47 n. 2, 96 n. 2, 100 n. 4, 101 n. 2, 103 n. 1, 180 n. 1, 205 n. 2, 206 n. 1, 240 n. 3, 267
Viterbo, 234
Voltaire, 59, 60, 7, 75, 97, 180, 4, 23, 37
Vosges, Place des, 104

WAHL, MAURICE, 100 n. 1
Wales, Prince of, 39
Wallon, 190 n., 4 n. 1, 5 and n. 3, 201 n. 1, 6 n. 3, 16 n. 2, 18 n. 1, 26 n. 3, 50 n
Walpole, Horace, 54, 5, 64
Watteau, 161
Webster, Mrs. Nesta, 40 n.
Wells, H. G., 202 n. 1
Williams, David, 61, 115
Williams, Henrietta Maria, 114 and n. 1, 137 n. 2; visits Mme de Genlis, 26
Wollstonecraft, Mary, 237

YOUNG, ARTHUR, 59, 151

00103580

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay

on 10 August, 2018